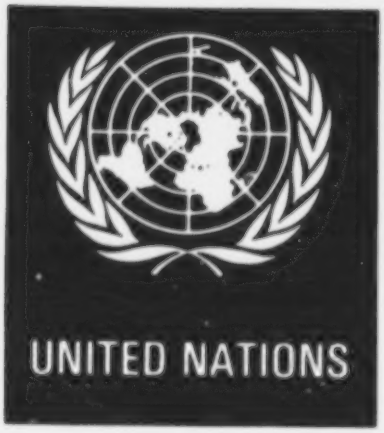

DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

SPECIAL BULLETIN ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

1993

CONTENTS

Page

I. Commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People 1

II. Texts of statements made and messages delivered on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, 1993

Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People	Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Chairman 2
United Nations General Assembly, forty-eighth session	Mr. S. R. Insanally, President 3
United Nations Secretariat	Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General 4
Security Council	Mr. José Luis Jesus, President of the Security Council for the month of November 1993 5
Palestine	Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, delivered by Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine 6
Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories	Mr. Stanley Kalpagé, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations and Chairman of the Special Committee 8
Movement of Non-Aligned Countries	Mr. Soeharto, President of the Republic of Indonesia and Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, delivered by Mr. Nugroho Wisnumurti, Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations 9
Organization of the Islamic Conference	Mr. Sardar Asif Ali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan and Chairman of the Twenty-first Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, delivered by Mr. Jamsheed K.A. Marker, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations 10
League of Arab States	Mr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, delivered by Mr. Mahmoud Aboul-Nasr, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations 11
International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine	Mr. Larry Ekin, Chairman of the North American Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, representing the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine 12

Page

III. **Messages received on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People**

A. **Messages from heads of State or Government**

Afghanistan	Mr. Burhanuddin Rabbani, President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan	14
Bahrain	Sheikh Isa bin Sulman Al Khalifa, Emir of Bahrain	14
Bangladesh	Mrs. Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh	15
Bolivia	Mr. Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, President of the Republic of Bolivia	15
Brunei Darussalam	Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, Sultan and Yang Dipertuan of Brunei Darussalam	16
China	Mr. Li Peng, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China	16
Cuba	Mr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Council of State and Government of the Republic of Cuba	17
Cyprus	Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus	17
Egypt	Mr. Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt	18
India	Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister of India	18
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Mr. Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran	19
Jordan	King Hussein Bin Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	19
Lao People's Democratic Republic	Mr. Nouhak Phoumsavanh, President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic	20
Malaysia	Mr. Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia	21
Maldives	Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of Maldives	21
Malta	Mr. Edward Fenech Adami, Prime Minister of Malta	22
Pakistan	Mrs. Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan	23
Qatar	Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al-Thani, Emir of Qatar	23
Russian Federation	Mr. Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation	24
Senegal	Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal	24
Spain	Mr. Felipe Gonzalez, Prime Minister of Spain	25
Sri Lanka	Mr. D. B. Wijetunga, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka	25

		Page
Suriname	Mr. Runaldo R. Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname	26
Thailand	Mr. Chuan Leekpai, Prime Minister of Thailand	26
Tunisia	Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia	27
Turkey	Mrs. Tansu Çiller, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey	28
United Arab Emirates	Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahayan, President of the United Arab Emirates	28
United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Ali Hassan Mwinyi, President of the United Republic of Tanzania	29
Viet Nam	Mr. Le Duc Anh, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam	29
Zimbabwe	Comrade Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe	30

B. Messages from Governments

Argentina		30
Guyana		31
Saudi Arabia		31

C. Messages from Ministers for Foreign Affairs

Algeria	Mr. Mohamed-Salah Dembri, Minister for Foreign Affairs	31
Brazil	Mr. Celso Luiz Nunes Amorim, Minister for External Relations	32
Chile	Mr. Enrique Silva Cimma, Minister for Foreign Affairs	32
Colombia	Ms. Noemí Sanín de Rubio, Minister for Foreign Affairs	33
Greece	Mr. Karolos Papoulias, Minister for Foreign Affairs	33
Guinea	Mr. Ibrahima Sylla, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation	34
Japan	Mr. Tsutomu Hata, Minister for Foreign Affairs	34
Lebanon	Mr. Fares Boueiz, Minister for Foreign Affairs	35
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Omar Mustafa Muntasser, Secretary of the General People's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation	35
Oman	Mr. Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs	36
Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Farouq Al-Sharaa, Minister for Foreign Affairs	37
Ukraine	Mr. Anatoliy M. Zlenko, Minister for Foreign Affairs	37

Page

D. Messages from intergovernmental organizations with observer status at the United Nations

Organization of the Islamic Conference — Mr. Hamid Algabid, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference 38

E. Messages from national liberation movements

Pan Africanist Congress of Azania — Mr. S.E.M. Pheko, Chief Representative to the United Nations 39

F. Messages from United Nations specialized agencies

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization — Mr. Federico Mayor, Director-General 40

G. Messages from non-governmental organizations

African Society National Committee of the Organization of African Unity 41

Arab Association for Human Rights 41

Arab Women's Union, Bethlehem 41

Association of Antifascists and Victims of Nazism in Israel 42

Association for Support and Defence of Bedouin Rights in Israel 42

Associazione Medica Italo-Palestinese 43

Centro de Documentación en Derechos Humanos "Segundo Montes Mozo S.J." 43

Instituto de Estudios Islamicos 44

International Committee for Arab-Israeli Reconciliation 45

International Movement of Conscientious War Resisters 45

International Progress Organization 45

International Union of Students 46

Israel Secular Humanist Association 46

Latin American Association for Human Rights 47

Union of Palestinian American Women 47

IV. Closing Statements

Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People 48

I. COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

On 29 November 1993, the International Day of Solidarity was observed at United Nations Headquarters, New York, and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna, as well as in several other cities, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977.

All States members of the United Nations and specialized agencies and observers were invited to attend the solemn meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People that took place on that day.

At that meeting, statements were made by: Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee; Mr. Samuel R. Insanally (Guyana), President of the General Assembly; the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali; and the President of the Security Council for the month of November, Mr. José Luis Jesus (Cape Verde). The Observer of Palestine, Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, read out a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Also, Mr. Stanley Kalpagé (Sri Lanka), made a statement as Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

In addition, the representative of Indonesia, Mr. Nugroho Wisnumurti, read out a message from President Soeharto in his capacity as Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. A further message was delivered by Mr. Jamsheed K. A. Marker (Pakistan) on behalf of Mr. Sardar Asif Ali, Foreign Minister of Pakistan and Chairman of the Twenty-first Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers. The Observer of the League of Arab States (LAS), Mr. Mahmoud Aboul-Nasr, read out a message from the Secretary-General of the organization, Mr. Ahmed Ismat Abdul Meguid. A further statement was made by Mr. Larry Ekin, representative of the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine.

A concluding statement was made by the Chairman of the Committee.

Messages to commemorate the occasion were received from 21 heads of State, 9 heads of Government, 3 Governments, 12 Foreign Ministers, as well as the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Further messages were received from 15 non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

In further commemoration of the International Day, the Committee arranged the screening of a series of films during the week beginning 29 November in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium. In addition, a cultural exhibit was presented by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, in the Public Lobby at United Nations Headquarters from 29 November to 3 December 1993.

At the United Nations Office in Geneva, a solemn meeting was held on 29 November. The meeting was chaired by the Director-General of the Geneva Office, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, who opened the meeting with an introductory statement. He also read out the statement sent by Mr. Stanley Kalpagé (Sri Lanka), Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. The statement of the Secretary-General was made available in the afternoon. The Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Senegal, Mr. Ibou Ndiaye, spoke on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The Permanent Observer of Palestine at Geneva, Mr. Nabil Ramlawi, also delivered a statement. Further statements were made by representatives of LAS, OIC, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine. Messages were received from the President of the Russian Federation, the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, the President of Senegal, the Emir of Bahrain and the Prime Minister of Malta. Other related activities included films shown before the opening ceremony.

At the United Nations Office in Vienna, a solemn meeting was held on 29 November 1993. In an opening statement, Mr. Habib Ammar (Tunisia) spoke on behalf of the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Other speakers included: the Secretary-General of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Wolfgang Schallenberg; the Deputy Commissioner-General for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Mr. William Eagleton; the representative of the European Union, Vicomte George Vilain XIII (Belgium); and the Permanent Observer of Palestine at Vienna, Mr. Faisal Aweidah, who delivered the message of Mr. Yasser Arafat. Other related activities included a screening of video tapes on the cultural and traditional life of the Palestinian family; a performance of Palestinian songs sung by children of UNRWA staff members and music by a Palestinian folk band; and an exhibition of Palestinian handicrafts.

II. TEXTS OF STATEMENTS MADE AND MESSAGES DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, 1993

COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

Statement by Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

[Original: French]

Today, the Committee is holding a solemn meeting to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/40 B, of 2 December 1977.

It is my pleasure and honour to welcome Mr. Samuel Insanally, President of the General Assembly, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. José Luis Jesus, President of the Security Council, Mr. Stanley Kalpagé, Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, and Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi, Head of the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), representative of Palestine. I should also like to welcome representatives of Member States, intergovernmental organizations and liberation movements, and representatives of NGOs, members of the press and all those who have accepted the Committee's invitation to participate in this solemn meeting.

I now invite everyone present to rise and observe a minute of silence in memory of all those who have given their lives for the cause of the Palestinian people.

I should now like, as Chairman, to make a statement on behalf of the Committee.

We have gathered here today, as we have done annually for the past 15 years, to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. We are greatly honoured by the presence at this solemn meeting of so many distinguished guests. In deciding on the observance of this day, the General Assembly, back in 1977, was mindful of the responsibility of the United Nations towards the Palestinian people and of the need to spare no effort in promoting a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine. This annual event is an occasion for the international community to reaffirm that commitment.

The commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People has traditionally provided an opportunity for the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, together with States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and United Nations bodies, to rededicate itself to intensifying efforts to contribute to achieving a peaceful and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine. It is now universally acknowledged that one of the conditions sine qua non for such a settlement is respect for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to self-determination.

This year the International Day of Solidarity takes on a special meaning. It has been a year of remarkable developments in the bilateral negotiating process, which began in Madrid in October 1991. The signing by Israel and the PLO of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements has revived, among the peoples of the region and the international community as a whole, the great hope of a just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and of its core issue - the question of Palestine. Moreover, the multilateral dimension of the peace process, which involves parties outside the region, has recently progressed to address the specifics of the transition period.

The Committee welcomed this significant progress towards the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and of other relevant United Nations resolutions. The Committee also welcomed the convening of the Conference to support Middle East peace and notes with satisfaction the pledges made by donor countries and institutions at the Conference, as well as at the follow-up meeting of its ad hoc liaison committee.

In its resolution 47/64 A of 11 December 1992, the General Assembly affirmed once again that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy. The Committee accordingly welcomed and supported the important and timely action taken by the Secretary-General in formulating a unified approach by the various elements of the Organization to the transition process and in sending a technical mission to the region.

The Committee remains convinced that the United Nations must be fully involved in the peace process and in the installation of a Palestinian national authority, as well as in providing the Palestinian people with broad assistance in all areas. It is to be hoped that the progress achieved in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, the initial withdrawal of Israeli forces and the adoption of confidence-building measures will help to ease tension in the region and to promote the atmosphere of mutual trust that is indispensable for the achievement of progress in other areas. We regard these as positive developments.

However, we must not lose sight of the fact that this is only the point of departure in a process that will be long and certainly difficult. The situation in the occupied territory is still very tense and volatile. The re-emergence of violence there is particularly disturbing. This Committee, the primary organ of the General Assembly concerned with the question of Palestine, remains alert to violations of human rights in the occupied territory, which are continuing even while negotiations are proceeding.

Certainly, the Committee has noted a positive change in the attitude of the Israeli leaders in the past year, as well as certain limited measures they have taken, including the release of some Palestinian prisoners. At this crucial moment, however, we wish to emphasize that only effective measures aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territory, including Jerusalem, and implementation of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention can create a climate conducive to real progress.

We are undoubtedly today at a decisive turning point in the sad history of the Palestinian people - perhaps even in the history of the whole Middle East. We are convinced that the time has come for the international community - in other words, the United Nations, Governments and NGOs - to act.

For its part, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People will spare no effort to make a concrete and positive contribution to the peace process and to the full implementation of the Declaration of Principles. We are committed to continuing to work to ensure the full enjoyment by the Palestinian people of its rights and to promoting a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Palestine question, based on respect for international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Mr. S. R. Insanally,
President of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly

I am pleased to join you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Committee in commemorating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

When the General Assembly decided, 16 years ago, to set aside this day - the anniversary of the partition of Palestine - it was to demonstrate its concern for and sympathy with the plight of a people long denied its legitimate rights, including its right to a homeland. The designation of this special day reaffirmed the Assembly's conviction that the attainment of political, economic and social justice by this dispossessed people was essential to a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the conflict in the Middle East.

As we meet on this occasion, we are pleased to note the progress that has been made on the question of Palestine. The recent agreement reached between the PLO and Israel, providing for mutual recognition and for Palestinian self-rule in the occupied territories, augurs well for a solution to this long-standing conflict. Both parties are therefore to be commended for this courageous step towards the establishment of peaceful relations between their peoples.

In welcoming this positive development, we urge them to display the necessary political will and good faith to bring their negotiations to full fruition. It would be a pity if a resurgence of violence were to be allowed to jeopardize the process now under way. Another opportunity for reconciliation may not soon present itself. It is imperative therefore that this breakthrough be explored to the full.

At this critical juncture, therefore, the United Nations must be vigilant against any erosion of the Washington agreements. It must be ready to play a role in creating whatever confidence-building measures may be necessary to dissipate the hostility and mistrust which continue to alienate the peoples of the region one from the other. It must also promote, in the larger interest of world peace and stability, earnest negotiations between Israel and its neighbours, leading to reliable security arrangements.

This Committee, under your dedicated leadership, Mr. Chairman, has done much to focus the world's attention on the suffering of the Palestinian people. It must be particularly satisfying for you to see that it is on the verge of realizing its aspirations. Your task, however, is far from finished. As the Palestinians prepare to exercise their right to self-determination, they will require the generous assistance of the international community to set up the machinery for their autonomy. The Committee must therefore work to ensure that these needs are met so that the Palestinians may one day take their proper place in the family of nations. I wish you, therefore, all success in your future endeavours.

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT

Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali,
Secretary-General

The past few months have witnessed historic developments on the question of Palestine. After years of hostilities, Israel and the PLO exchanged letters of recognition. On 13 September 1993, they signed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements leading to a permanent settlement, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Talks are currently under way concerning the modalities of the implementation of the Declaration of Principles in Jericho and Gaza.

The Declaration of Principles has, in turn, encouraged the pursuit of negotiations between Israel and Jordan. It is my fervent hope that progress will soon be achieved between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic and between Lebanon and Israel in the peace process.

In an effort to support the momentum in the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, I constituted a task force to establish an integrated United Nations approach towards economic and social development in the occupied territories, with particular focus on Gaza, where the need is greatest.

At the request of Chairman Arafat, I recently dispatched a technical mission to Tunis and the occupied territories. That mission has initiated discussions on ways in which the United Nations can provide assistance in support of the implementation of the Declaration of Principles.

A United Nations coordinator, resident in the region, will liaise with other institutions, agencies and NGOs involved in development projects in order to avoid duplication of effort and to mobilize international financial support for this process.

The response of the international community in support of the Palestinian people at this challenging time has been most encouraging. Today, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People symbolizes the continuing responsibility of the United Nations towards the Palestinians.

The construction of peace still requires our efforts. But we now live with the hope that the years of struggle, occupation and bitterness are over. We can see the first signs of peace. The suffering is not yet over but its end is in sight. We shall be there to see the new day. The struggle of the people of Palestine will not be in vain.

The time for war is over. Let everyone now turn to the task of constructing a durable and just peace.

[Original: Arabic]

The Israeli-Palestinian accord, the direct mutual Palestinian-Israeli recognition and the meeting held between Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin, all these historic developments, while putting an end to a painful, bloody episode in the history of the Middle East and the Arab world, especially the history of Israeli-Arab relations, have turned a new leaf that has its own difficulties, hardships and challenges. Therefore the overwhelming optimism generated by the accord should not hide from us the difficulties of the present and the challenges of the future.

Despite the fact that this historic accord has put us all on the right and only path to achieving the comprehensive, just and durable settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and especially the question of Palestine, the path is still long and arduous, for the extremist factions are still there on the Israeli and the Palestinian sides and despite the differing affiliations and contradictory objectives of such factions, there is the common interest they share in opposing that accord. That alliance between those factions will create numerous difficulties, examples of which we now witness in the occupied territories. Therefore, it is the duty of the international community to support peace unwaveringly and to continue to support those who advocate peace. It is the duty of the international community to support and encourage the efforts of both the Palestinian and the Israeli peoples to achieve and maintain peace, as a first step to be followed by other steps on the road towards the achievement of peace for all the region's peoples.

It is then that peace would become truly comprehensive, just and lasting, as called for by the United Nations over many a long decade.

Let me end my statement on this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People with a sincere greeting, with renewed appreciation and with expressions of continued solidarity. The greeting goes to the people of Palestine in its armed struggle. The appreciation goes to the people of Palestine for its valour and courage in its struggle for peace. The solidarity is that of the United Nations and the international community as they offer every form of assistance that can promote progress towards the peace after which we aspire.

The Palestinian people, which has asserted itself and affirmed its legitimate rights through armed struggle and violent confrontation, is capable of entrenching those rights in peace, through political and cultural struggle. The challenge of peace is the greatest of all challenges. So let us rise to that challenge.

SECURITY COUNCIL

Mr. José Luis Jesus,
President of the Security Council for the month of November 1993

At the outset, allow me to thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for the kind invitation extended to me, in my capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of November, to participate in this special meeting to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to join in this important annual event, at which the international community manifests its solidarity with the Palestinian people and its enduring commitment to the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The annual observance of this day is not only a symbolic act of solidarity with a people striving for the attainment of its legitimate rights but also a reflection of the importance attached to the need of bringing about the long-awaited solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, which has preoccupied the international community and the Security Council for over 45 years.

There is no doubt that the year 1993 will be remembered as the year of encouraging developments in the Middle East, as well as of bold diplomatic moves of major significance. The welcome progress in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, resulting in the letters of mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO and the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, has ushered in a new era in the history of the Middle East. Much credit should be given to the leaders of the two peoples for their political courage, wisdom and foresight. Together, they have set out on a road to reconciliation and peace, which will benefit the peoples of the entire Middle East region. Our congratulations go to those who have worked tirelessly to facilitate this process.

For many years, the Security Council has been closely associated with the persistent efforts aimed at achieving a just and lasting settlement of the complex issues involved in the Middle East conflict. As President of the Council, I am particularly gratified that the recent landmark agreement was reached in the course of negotiations based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

I would like to emphasize that the members of the Council are fully aware of the difficulties involved in the transitional process and call upon the parties to proceed in the same spirit of flexibility and mutual understanding, in the interest of peace. We note with appreciation the international community's overwhelming support for the agreements reached and its readiness to make a constructive contribution to their successful implementation. The Council is gratified by the early commitments for assistance made by various donor countries and organizations, including the United Nations, and stresses the importance of effective and coordinated involvement in this endeavour by all concerned.

Guided by its responsibilities under the Charter, the Security Council will continue to be committed to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the entire region of the Middle East for the benefit of all parties concerned, including the Palestinian people. Today, this is particularly vital, as much has yet to be done to achieve that goal.

PALESTINE

Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, delivered by Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine

[Original: Arabic]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, 29 November, I should like, in the name of our Palestinian people, my brother members of the Executive Committee of the PLO and the new Palestinian National Authority, and on my own behalf, to convey to the Committee our cordial greetings and best wishes. I also extend my deepest thanks to Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, for the important and wide-ranging efforts he has been deploying and continues to deploy to reaffirm the rights of our Palestinian people and to promote them on all levels and in all fields.

I also extend my deepest thanks to my brother, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his meticulous follow-up and sponsorship of the work of the Committee. The valuable efforts he is undertaking will strengthen the role of the United Nations in solving international crises and especially that of the Middle East, with its core issue, the cause of Palestine.

I should also like to commend also the major and important role that has been performed, and continues to be performed, by the United Nations, its institutions, its specialized agencies and its Division for Palestinian Rights in maintaining, strengthening, emphasizing and protecting the rights of the Palestinian people and in providing assistance to our people to mitigate its suffering under its tragic living conditions. In all this, your Committee has played a very important and significant role.

Therefore, I should like also to convey my deepest thanks to the Ambassadors of the fraternal and friendly countries that are members of your Committee and to their Governments and peoples for the positions of support and solidarity which they have taken and continue to take on the side of the Palestinian people's just struggle for regaining and exercise its national inalienable rights, including its right to return, its right to self-determination and to the establishment of its own independent State, with Holy Al-Quds as its capital.

The meeting of your esteemed Committee takes place under important circumstances and at a time of major change in our region, the Middle East. This puts the region at a strategic crossroads: either to move forward on the track of democracy, development and prosperity and to play, thereby, a positive role in shaping a promising future for its peoples that would contribute to strengthening peace and stability in the region and in the world, or to be pushed back into the cycles of chaos, wars, calamities and Balkanization, with all the attendant dangers that allow the forces of darkness and retrogression to take the upper hand, with all that that would mean for the peace and security of the whole world.

This realistically describes the situation that has existed since the signing of the agreement set out in the Declaration of Principles and the mutual recognition between the PLO and the Government of Israel. The agreement does in fact represent a major turning-point in the history of the Palestinian cause and the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is also a basic step necessary for our joint efforts to arrive at a just, permanent and comprehensive peace in the Middle East region on the basis of the implementation of resolutions under international law, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It is necessary to achieve tangible progress on all other tracks, so as to achieve the Israeli withdrawal from the Arab and Palestinian occupied territories, including Holy Al-Quds.

The agreement contained in the Declaration of Principles, which we signed in Washington on 13 September 1993, stipulates complete withdrawal by the Israeli occupying forces from the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area, where the Palestine National Authority will be established, and, at the same time, the rest of the West Bank will be subject to the agreement in the interim period, during which time the issues involved in that agreement, along with those of Arab Al-Quds, the refugees and the final status of the settlements, will be discussed, not later than the third year, in order to establish their final status.

The agreement stipulates also that free legislative elections shall be conducted to elect the Palestinian Council, which will have wide-ranging legislative powers that cover all the occupied Palestinian territories, including Holy Al-Quds.

At the same time we are working on establishing the structures and institutions necessary for translating this agreement into reality on the ground. Our Palestinian Central Council has ratified this agreement; it has formed the Palestine National Authority and has chosen me to be its President. We have formed the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction to plan and formulate economic policy in the Palestinian territories and to specify, plan and carry out projects. We are also establishing the Palestinian Security Force, which will be one of the underpinnings of peace, security and stability in the region.

However, the success of this agreement depend, in the first place, on the intention and desire of both parties to implement its articles faithfully, in a spirit of understanding and co-equality, and to resolve existing and new differences and to surmount obstacles through peaceful dialogue and arbitration. Success will also depend on the will of the international community, which is a witness to the agreement, to provide all necessary support. This will require great and sincere efforts on the part of all our brethren and friends, and of all those who are for just peace the world over.

You are no doubt aware that we need to rebuild our Palestinian national structures and institutions and the infrastructures of our national economy, because the Israeli military authorities and the Israeli civil administration have destroyed most of those institutions and infrastructures. This places on our shoulders great financial, material and moral responsibilities, and we will need the support of the international community for our people on all levels in the form of all kinds of political, economic, material and moral assistance.

While we extend our thanks to the donor countries, which have pledged $2.2 billion over a period of five years as their contribution to this difficult process, we must assure you that the programmes that we have put together with the help of the World Bank and friendly powers require much greater amounts than have already been pledged; the amount will exceed $12 billion up to the end of the century. We, therefore, think that implementing the agreement places on the shoulders of the United Nations and its organizations and specialized agencies, and its Member States, additional responsibilities in taking part with us in the area of reconstruction, and in implementing, guaranteeing and consolidating the agreement and supervising its various stages.

The United Nations has an important and effective role to play in the process of maintaining world peace. The implementation of this historic agreement is part and parcel of this process of maintaining peace. We call upon the United Nations to help us in developing that role on the territory of our Palestine National Authority, at all levels and in all fields, in such a way as to foster the opportunities for consolidating peace and stability in our region, which is of strategic importance to the whole world.

We are aware of the major role of the United Nations in helping our people carry out many schemes, plans and programmes in education, health, environment and the protection of our heritage and holy places through its organs and specialized agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNRWA, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), UNESCO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). These programmes affect the daily lives of our people, which must be improved so that our people may feel the benefits of the just peace, consolidate its foundations and promote it in the region as a whole.

We want to rebuild a society whose national institutions and the infrastructure of its national economy the Israeli occupation has succeeded in destroying. Our efforts in rebuilding our homeland will have to match our dreams and the dreams of our people to build its own, independent State, with Arab Al-Quds as its capital. We want to build a modern and open society based on justice, social cooperation and a free market economy; a society founded on democracy, political

pluralism and participation by all our people's social forces; a society based, not on racism and hate, but on justice and on equality before the law, on respect for human rights and basic political freedoms; a dynamic society, in which women participate fully side by side with men; a society that provides opportunities for our people that would enable it to take the initiative and work; a society based on good neighbourliness, tolerance and love, in conformity with the history, culture, civilization and traditions of our people in its own land, Palestine, which God has chosen as the land to receive divine messages and saints, the place of the Prophet Muhammad's nocturnal journey and of the nativity of Jesus Christ.

A just, permanent and comprehensive peace in Palestine and in the Middle East is a great and noble and human aim - one which we have always sought. All Member States and this Committee stand witness to the tremendous efforts we have deployed and continue to deploy to achieve peace because peace is a Palestinian, Israeli, Arab, regional and international responsibility. This also means solving the problems and addressing the causes leading to the deterioration of the situation and the proliferation of conflicts and wars.

For over half a century our region has lived through a bitter period of instability, wars, and political, economic and social problems that have sapped its energies and capabilities and deprived it and its peoples - in particular our Palestinian people - of security, development and growth. This continues to pose a grave danger and threat to international peace and security. This Committee, therefore, has a special and great importance in terms of following up on the question of the inalienable rights of our Palestinian people. This is especially true over the interim period, until we arrive at the final phase and at the establishment of the Palestinian State, with Holy Al-Quds as its capital, for this will have a direct impact on the future of peace and cooperation in our region and in the world, and because the alternative to peace is turmoil, chaos, Balkanization and war.

Let us all work together to promote a just and comprehensive peace in Palestine, the land of peace, in the region and in the world. We look to this Committee with increasing hope to help our people achieve a just peace, in its interest and in that of the people of the region, so that our children and theirs will have a bright and secure future.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Mr. Stanley Kalpagé, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations and Chairman of the Special Committee

On behalf of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, and on my own behalf, I have the honour to convey to you this message on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, at a time when historic developments are taking place in the Middle East.

Let me at the outset convey to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the members of your Committee, our deep appreciation of your sustained efforts to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to express our deep appreciation at the determination, courage and wisdom which both parties - the Government of Israel and the PLO - have demonstrated in the negotiations leading to the conclusion of the agreement signed in Washington on 13 September 1993. We hope that this agreement will usher in a new era of genuine peace, understanding and prosperity in the region.

As has been its practice in the past, the Special Committee has continued to reflect faithfully a comprehensive picture of the situation with regard to the enjoyment of human rights in the occupied territories, in spite of its inability to visit the territories.

The Special Committee is of the opinion that the most encouraging positive developments, which started in September, must go hand in hand with full compliance with all universally accepted standards of international humanitarian and human rights law. Since the outset of its activities, the Special Committee has stressed that occupation in itself constitutes a violation of human rights; it considers the recent historic agreement as a first but most significant step in the process of the restitution of all of the occupied territories.

The Special Committee has observed that the denial of the enjoyment of many fundamental rights over a period of more than two decades has led the inhabitants of the occupied territories to feel frustration and despair. It is the hope of the Special Committee that the new era of understanding which started in September of this year will be characterized by a dramatic change of attitude on the part of the Israeli authorities, leading to a truly meaningful improvement in this regard. The Special Committee hopes that its findings will be taken into account when all the concrete measures designed to give life to the spirit of the recent understanding are decided upon.

During the period under review, the Special Committee has been preoccupied with several areas in which it feels that changes must be made to maintain the momentum created by the new situation. The Special Committee's findings are contained in its twenty-fifth report to the General Assembly.

The administration of justice has been a continued source of concern as it has been in many respects characterized by an absence of due process of law and legal safeguards for the Arab population of the occupied territories and a severity of sentences, which has often been disproportionate to the gravity of the offence. The Special Committee welcomes the encouraging trend of the release of prisoners, but remains preoccupied by their treatment, which has given rise to numerous strikes.

A practice which the Special Committee believes should be halted is the demolition of entire blocks of houses and apartments during searches for wanted persons. The Committee also hopes that deportations of persons on the grounds of security will not take place in the future. Another concern is the use of excessive force to quell the uprising of the population of the occupied territories. The new climate of understanding requires a thorough review of the rules for opening fire, and that the use of undercover units be renounced.

In the light of the new situation, the Special Committee believes that the extremely complex issue of settlements will have to be the subject of particularly careful consideration by all concerned and that those who have been affected by land confiscation will have to be given the opportunity to seek and obtain redress.

Finally, allow me to express the sincere hope of the Special Committee that the spirit of the historic Declaration of Principles, which was signed in September, will soon be translated into practical reality concerning the full enjoyment of human rights by the entire population of the occupied territories. We hope that the political will and foresight shown by both parties, which was conducive to the September agreement, will lay the foundations for making the Middle East an area of lasting peace and stability, with a promising future, free from tension and conflict, in the larger interests of world peace.

MOVEMENT OF NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES

Mr. Soeharto, President of the Republic of Indonesia and Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, delivered by Mr. Nugroho Wisnumurti, Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations

On the solemn occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I am privileged, as Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, to reaffirm our support of the struggle of the Palestinians to attain their cherished objectives of peace, freedom and justice.

May I recall that since its inception, the question of Palestine has remained at the centre of our concerns and that the non-aligned countries have fully supported all the resolutions adopted by the United Nations in defence of the legitimate Palestinian national rights. We remain steadfast in our belief that a just and comprehensive settlement of this question is essential for peace and security in the Middle East.

This year's observance takes place against the backdrop of the historic signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements by the PLO and the Government of Israel, providing for Palestine self-rule and the withdrawal of Israel from the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area of the West Bank, as well as a framework for negotiations to achieve a permanent settlement. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has welcomed this Declaration as it constitutes a significant milestone on the way to the just and comprehensive solution of the Palestine question, which has always been the core of the Middle East conflict. It has also given us cause for optimism that peace, mutual trust and reconciliation, which have eluded the Palestinians and Israelis for so long, may become a reality.

As a nation that has suffered from the bitterness of colonialism, we have a motto that says: "We love peace, but we love freedom even more". It is within the spirit of this motto that we welcome the current peace efforts. We are confident that this peace initiative will, in the end, bring the Palestinian people to the realization of its aspirations for national independence and sovereignty in its own land.

The mutual recognition between the PLO and the Government of Israel and the subsequent agreement for Palestinian interim self-government have profoundly changed the political landscape in the Middle East and promise to usher in a new era of peace and cooperation. However, the momentum generated by these initial steps should not be allowed to dissipate; rather, it should be nurtured and reinforced by determined efforts in resolving a number of outstanding issues during the difficult transition period, including the right of Palestinians to exercise jurisdiction over occupied territories; by the initiation of remedial measures in redressing the critical socio-economic problems facing them; and by the establishment of viable economic links with neighbouring countries. Intensified international efforts would also be essential in laying the economic foundations and other infrastructures for ensuring a secure future for the Palestinian people. This would offer emerging Palestinian national institutions an unprecedented opportunity to begin the reconstruction of their country and thereby prepare for full independence and statehood.

In the meantime, Israel should recognize the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention in the occupied territories, restore human rights and rescind its orders that have restricted the political, economic, social and cultural activities of the Palestinians for more than a quarter of a century. It is essential and equally important for Israel to refrain from hindering the peace process and to implement the Declaration in good faith.

While we are greatly encouraged by the positive developments that have taken place, we are also conscious that the path towards the attainment of a just and durable settlement is made up of uncertain terrain fraught with ambiguities and obstacles. It is therefore essential to intensify the peace process on the basis of mutual benefit and justice and in a spirit of compromise. In this regard, the full implementation of the various provisions of the accord, as well as of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), is of crucial importance. Furthermore, the non-aligned countries call for a permanent responsibility of the United Nations until the question of Palestine is fully resolved in accordance with those resolutions. Such a role for the Organization would also facilitate the settlement of various interrelated aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict, including arms control, regional security, economic development, environment and refugees.

The task of building peace in the Middle East has just begun, after years of confrontation, suffering and instability. In this noble endeavour, the essential elements of a just and comprehensive settlement must include the withdrawal of Israel from all Arab and Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, the Syrian Golan Heights and southern Lebanon; the recognition and exercise of the legitimate national rights of Palestinians, primarily the right to self-determination; and respect for the rights of the States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries.

The Middle East is now at a critical turning point. Hence, the prospects offered by the new opportunities should not be missed. The non-aligned countries hope that substantive progress will be made in the peace talks, leading towards the establishment of a new regional order of justice, dignity and peaceful coexistence.

On this occasion, I should like to commend the activities of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for the regaining of those rights which have for so long have been recognized and demanded by the international community.

ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

Mr. Sardar Asif Ali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan and Chairman of the Twenty-first Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, delivered by Mr. Jamshed K.A. Marker, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations

Solidarity with the Palestinian people and support for its cause were the foremost inspiration behind the creation of OIC. It is therefore natural that OIC should have consistently taken a position of principle on the Palestinian issue. Since its creation over 20 years ago, OIC has extended unqualified support to the Palestinian cause, particularly the liberation of Arab territories, including Al-Quds al-Sharif. It has repeatedly called for the preservation of the Islamic and Arab character of this holy city, which houses the first kiblah of Islam.

Consistent with its charter, OIC has promoted a just and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian problem based on the complete withdrawal of Israel from all Arab and Palestinian territories. It has consistently affirmed that the restoration of the national rights of the Palestinian people is a sine qua non for the establishment of durable peace in the Middle East.

The OIC Foreign Ministers, in their Annual Coordination Meeting, held in New York on 29 September 1993, has welcomed, as a first step, the positive developments in the Middle East peace process, following the signing of the Declaration of Principles on the modalities for interim self-rule in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Ministers had also reaffirmed the necessity of making progress on the Lebanese and Syrian tracks, with a view to arriving at a just, comprehensive and final settlement on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and the principle of land for peace.

OIC has invariably endorsed the necessity of adhering to all United Nations resolutions calling for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and putting an end to the occupation and to Israeli settlements on Palestinian and Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Al-Quds al-Sharif. We would like to reaffirm that Al-Quds Al-Sharif, with its national and religious significance, remains a fundamental issue for all Islamic States and that its restoration to Palestine and Islamic sovereignty is necessary. OIC will continue its support to the PLO to enable it to face the next crucial phase and to strengthen its position in future negotiations so that the Palestinian authority is established across the entire Palestinian territory.

OIC, while extending its appreciation to the United Nations and its specialized agencies for their commendable work in the occupied Palestinian territories, invites them to intensify their assistance to the Palestinian people so as to enable it to rebuild its economy and institutions.

LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

Mr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, delivered by Mr. Mahmoud Aboul-Nasr, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations

[Original: Arabic]

It gives me pleasure to express to you during this celebration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People our appreciation for the efforts of your distinguished Committee to achieve a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine in defence of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, especially its right to self-determination and to the establishment of a State on the entirety of its national soil.

The peace-loving peoples and Governments of the world recall, with a keen sense of pride and gratification, the responsiveness of the international community, as represented by the United Nations and its various agencies, especially the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in support of the Palestinian people and its rights of return and self-determination. The countries of the world recall the demands that have been made to Israel not to change the demographic and geographical situation in the occupied territories, especially in the holy city of Al-Quds, the affirmation that the Palestinian people is a principal party to the establishment of peace in the Middle East and the fact that continual efforts have been made to underline the right of the Palestinian people to regain its land.

It is important here to reaffirm Security Council resolution 252 (1968) of 21 May 1968, which considers that all legislative and administrative measures and actions by Israel in Al-Quds are null and void and that they could never alter the status of the Holy City. This resolution also deplored the continued inhuman practices of Israel against the Palestinian citizens in the occupied territories, the acts of murder and torture and the arrests and demolition of houses, all of which breach the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 on the protection of civilians under occupation. These acts are in no way consonant with the peace process, which has been supported by the international community and accepted by all the Arab States, which are keenly interested in making all necessary efforts to establish just and lasting peace in the Middle East under the terms of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), and other relevant resolutions, all of which are based on the principle of land for peace.

It was in reaffirmation of that stance that the Council of the League of Arab States adopted resolution 5092 on 12 September 1991, prior to the Madrid Peace Conference, in support of all the peace efforts, the positions of the Arab parties to the peace process and the cause of Palestine in all its aspects. Furthermore, at its 100th session, the LAS Council endorsed the Israeli-Palestinian agreement, signed on 13 September 1993, as a first important step towards the

implementation of the land-for-peace principle, that must be supplemented by a number of other urgent steps on all tracks.

LAS, which supports the peace process on the basis of full Israeli withdrawal from the Arab territories occupied by Israel in 1967, reaffirms that the implementation of the Security Council resolutions adopted in this respect could be the most successful incentive to laying down the foundations of peace and development in the Middle East region.

LAS calls upon all members of the international community, and particularly the most influential Powers, to bring pressure to bear upon Israel in order to compel it to comply with the resolutions of the international community.

LAS would like to express its confidence that the international community is capable of supporting the peace process and can play its mandated role. LAS is also confident that the international community, and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People represents an important element of that community, is seeking a world of fraternity and peace where human rights reign, a society from which the hotbeds of conflict and tension should disappear, especially in the Middle East. The international community should make all necessary efforts to ensure the restoration to the Palestinian people of all its legitimate and inalienable rights in order to achieve its right to prosperity and stability like all other peoples of the world.

I extend to the Committee our thanks for its solidarity with the Palestinian people in order to achieve peace, and wish it continued success in its efforts.

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Mr. Larry Ekin, Chairman of the North American Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, representing the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine

May I express greetings on behalf of Mr. Don Betz, Chairman of the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine. Mr. Betz was regrettably unable to attend today and so the opportunity came to me to make a few remarks on this occasion.

Our gathering today takes place at a time of profound changes in the international political landscape. This is self-evident and I will leave it to others to explore more fully and elaborate upon this new political context. I would prefer to use this opportunity to discuss how we as NGOs are responding to this new situation and what measures are required from the NGO community to help to build momentum that will accumulate and result in the fruition of the Palestinian people's aspirations.

Historically, NGOs expressed their solidarity with the Palestinian people through three main forms of involvement. These can be characterized as direct aid and assistance, information activities and advocacy work.

During times of crisis going back to at least 1948, NGOs often provided direct aid in the form of relief supplies. At other times, these forms of assistance to the Palestinian people evolved to reflect more of an emphasis on community-based developments and the support of legitimate national aspirations. As the programmes of NGOs became more sophisticated, they also understood the importance of the active participation of the Palestinian people in the decision-making processes surrounding these endeavours.

NGOs have consistently tried to inform their constituents about the conditions faced by the Palestinian people. In North America, this emphasis on education consistently sought to humanize the Palestinian people for an ill-informed public.

As NGOs have deepened their relationships with the Palestinian people, they also came to increasingly understand that they must practice advocacy - that is, it is not enough to posses information, but, rather, information must be used to mobilize their constituents, to inform Governments and to hold them accountable.

In addition, I would note that in the past decade, NGOs built a productive working relationship with the United Nations through the Committee. Working together with the Palestinian people, we have succeeded in enhancing the work of all of us. Indeed, the resolutions of the United Nations provided the political outlines for the framework that many NGOs have embraced as fundamental to achieving a just solution to this question.

Under the new political conditions,and in the new political context, we expect NGOs to continue to practice all three forms of their solidarity work. We also anticipate pursuing our partnership with the United Nations by re-evaluating and refining our participation in the light of the new conditions in order to express our continuing solidarity.

Virtually everyone anticipates a massive infusion of material aid and development assistance as a result of the Declaration of Principles. At the governmental level, we have seen the commitments made through the World Bank and by many donor countries for aid aimed at sustaining the Declaration of Principles. At the level of NGOs, our constituents are already working to do what we can to ensure that a maximum of NGO aid is delivered with a minimum of waste. NGO constituents are drafting statements of principles and guidelines for involvement. We are attempting to reach and educate newly interested NGOs that are anticipating entering for the first time under new conditions.

However, we also anticipate increasing our information and advocacy work. We want to ensure that while attention is focused on Jericho and the Gaza Strip, the plight of the remainder of the Palestinian people is neither neglected nor ignored. What is more, experience in other situations around the world teaches us that during this approaching period of sensitive negotiations, NGOs can continue to play a vital role in assisting the Palestinian people.

Finally, and most importantly, let us recall why we are gathered here today. During its years of exile and occupation, the Palestinian people made many friends around the world. Its achievements and its courage inspired millions of people. We would also take note of the contributions made by many Israelis who defied the dictates of their Government and acted in conscience to pursue visions of a future that accommodated both peoples.

Today we are hopeful that we have indeed witnessed a new beginning, but we are under no illusions. What has been achieved retains a fragility that may be all-too easily shattered. But we can promise this: Whether the new developments prove transient and illusory or whether they prove to be important building blocks in the establishment of a peaceful Middle East, our solidarity and sense of commitment will remain. The Palestinian people deserves no less.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to present these thoughts. I look forward to discussing these developments with you and with other members of the Committee in greater detail. I also look forward to sharing more information with the Committee on the ongoing role of NGO activities on the question of Palestine.

III. MESSAGES RECEIVED ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

A. Messages from heads of State or Government

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Burhanuddin Rabbani, President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, 29 November, I declare, on behalf of the Islamic State of Afghanistan and the people of Afghanistan, our most overwhelming support of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, to have its own State and of the principle requiring the withdrawal of occupying forces from the occupied Palestinian territories, including Al-Ouds al-Sharif (Jerusalem), and of the inalienable rights of all displaced Palestinians to return to their homes in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan is looking forward to the day when an independent Palestine will contribute to the consolidation of peace in the region and in the world.

BAHRAIN

Sheikh Isa bin Sulman Al Khalifa, Emir of Bahrain

[Original: Arabic]

All the Arab and Islamic countries and the great majority of the members of the international community represented in this global forum stand today in solidarity with the Palestinian people, expressing their support for its established and inalienable legitimate rights, which have been upheld by numerous United Nations resolutions and which are based, by virtue of law and right, on international legitimacy.

This global solidarity is vital for the assistance to and support for the Palestinian people, which with all the forces of patriotism is standing its ground and continuing its just struggle to raise the national banner in order to recover its legitimate right to establish an independent State on its national territory and to be blessed with life, freedom and the exercise of all its legitimate national rights, in the same manner as all other peoples.

The negotiations that began at the Madrid Conference in 1991 between the parties to the conflict in the Middle East and were followed by further rounds at Washington, in which progress was made at times, but which were most of the time bogged down with difficulties, have finally resulted in the agreement on the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, which was signed at Washington on 13 September 1993. This agreement undoubtedly constitutes an important historic step and decisive turning point for the Palestinian question, in view of the hopes pinned thereon - when its provisions are fully implemented - for the realization of the goal of the establishment of a Palestinian State on Palestinian territory and the attainment of peaceful coexistence in the region. We also hope that similar progress and achievements may be forthcoming on the Syrian, Lebanese and Jordanian negotiation tracks.

As the Palestinian-Israeli agreement moves from a theoretical framework to one of implementation, it is necessary to make serious and persevering efforts and to take the utmost care to preserve the unity and cohesion of Palestinian ranks, with all their various groupings and viewpoints, to ensure the support of the Arab backers standing firmly behind them in order to overcome all the challenges and to channel all the efforts of the leadership and the people towards attainment of the ultimate stage of full Palestinian national independence.

Furthermore, peace between the Arabs and Israel must be based on a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the whole Middle East question. Hence the need for a withdrawal from all Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, as well as from the Arab territories of the Syrian Golan and southern Lebanon, in other words, full implementation of Security Council resolutions 342 (1967) and 338 (1973) and all other relevant international resolutions. It also requires the removal of all types of weapons of mass destruction from the region, including Israel, so that Israel's nuclear arsenal should not continue to jeopardize the opportunities for building a real peace between the peoples of the Middle East.

In conclusion, we should like to reiterate Bahrain's position of support for the cause of the independence of the Palestinian people and the establishment of its State on its national territory, as well as our appreciation for this important historic step in the evolution of the Palestinian question, in order that all the national aspirations may be realized for the fraternal Palestinian State, which encompasses the Al-Aqsa Mosque - the first kiblah and the third Holy Place.

BANGLADESH

Mrs. Khaleda Zia,
Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

On this day, when the international community expresses its solidarity with the people of Palestine, I, on behalf of the Government and the people of Bangladesh, reaffirm our unequivocal support and total commitment to its just cause and the realization of its inalienable rights.

The commemoration of this day acquires a special significance this year against the backdrop of the accord between Israel and the PLO on the Declaration of Principles signed in Washington on 13 September 1993. Bangladesh has consistently supported a comprehensive solution to the Middle East problem of which the core issue is the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The agreement has evoked great optimism that peace in the region may now be in sight. Bangladesh believes that the accord is a historic first step towards a just, comprehensive and durable settlement of the Middle East problem. We call upon the international community to extend all necessary support and assistance to the Palestinian people at this crucial juncture, to overcome existing obstacles.

Bangladesh hopes that the peace initiatives now underway will lead to the realization of the overall objective of a just and durable peace which would include, inter alia, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied territories, including Al-Quds al-Sharif, the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of the Palestinian people.

BOLIVIA

Mr. Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, President of the Republic of Bolivia

[Original: Spanish]

My Government has expressed its satisfaction at the mutual recognition agreement achieved between the State of Israel and the PLO.

This agreement ushers in the period of peace in the Middle East so long desired by the international community. The agreement between Israelis and Palestinians reflects a new spirit of justice and dialogue for cooperation throughout the world, between nations in conflict because of historical circumstances. The mutual acceptance of the inadmissibility of acquiring territory through war, of the need to work for a just and lasting peace and of the ceasing of all military activities with the exception of the right of self-defence is without doubt a highly significant step forward in the reordering of the international system. This event represents a historic lesson in the search for solutions in those regions where territorial disputes still impede development, justice, coexistence and genuine friendship between peoples and Governments.

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah,
Sultan and Yang Dipertuan of Brunei Darussalam

The Government and people of Brunei Darussalam are pleased to join all members of the international community in observing once more the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Brunei Darussalam reaffirms its steadfast and continuous support for the just and legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people in its endeavours to achieve and exercise its inalienable rights to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State of Palestine.

This year's observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People has particular significance in view of the signing of the historical agreement between the PLO and Israel, and the subsequent negotiations for its implementation. Brunei Darussalam welcomes the agreement and hopes that further progress will be made that will lead to the eventual restoration of all Palestinian rights and a comprehensive, just and durable settlement of the Middle East problems in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

We congratulate the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its commendable efforts in advancing and promoting the cause of Palestine, a noble endeavour which Brunei Darussalam continues to support in the enduring spirit of solidarity.

CHINA

Mr. Li Peng,
Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China

On the occasion of the convocation of the meeting to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I would like to extend, on behalf of the Chinese Government and people, our warm congratulations to the meeting.

The mutual recognition between the PLO and Israel last September and their signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements on Gaza and Jericho represented an important outcome of the protracted struggle waged by the Palestinian people as well as a wise move by leaders of the PLO and Israel. We wish to express our appreciation and support for this major breakthrough in the Middle East peace process and hope that the parties concerned will continue their efforts in search of a comprehensive, just and reasonable solution to the Middle East question, of which the Palestinian issue is the crux, and for the eventual realization of peace and stability in the Middle East in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The Palestinian people have fought long and courageously for the restoration of its legitimate national rights, and made tremendous efforts for a political settlement to the Palestine question. The Chinese Government and people have all along supported the Palestinian people in its just struggle, and have actively backed and promoted efforts by the Arab countries and Israel to settle their disputes through peaceful negotiations. We will, as always, work to push forward the Middle East peace process and provide support and assistance to the best of our ability for the Palestinian people in its efforts to rebuild its homeland.

CUBA

Mr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the
Council of State and Government of the Republic of Cuba

[Original: Spanish]

We are, this year, observing the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in the framework of the implementation of the steps laid down in the Declaration of Principles, concerning Palestinian self-government in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area, concluded between the PLO and the State of Israel last September.

We hope that the agreement and the mutual recognition by the two sides will be considered steps forward in the search for guarantees of security and well-being for all the countries of the region, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Many difficulties remain, however, which will require enormous efforts by the parties involved to ensure that the complex negotiation process that has begun will lead to a just and lasting peace in the region of the Middle East, with a view to the Palestinian people's ultimately exercising its inalienable rights, including the right to establish its own independent State. It is also absolutely essential fully to recognize the legitimate rights of the other Arab States to recover the territories illegally occupied by Israel.

I am confident that the United Nations, in particular the Committee so ably chaired by you, will continue to do its utmost to achieve those goals, and I reaffirm the support of the Cuban Government and people for any initiative leading to a just and lasting peace for the benefit of all.

CYPRUS

Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I would like to reiterate once more, on behalf of the Government and the people of Cyprus and on my own behalf, our strong commitment and resolute support for the noble struggle of the Palestinian people, in its courageous and worthy endeavour to secure its legitimate and inalienable rights.

The Palestinian people, with a spirit of resilience and determination, are fully committed today - as they have always been - to the struggle for its human rights, freedom, justice and national independence.

Along with the rest of the international community, we reaffirm our solidarity with the Palestinian people. It is our firm belief that, unless the Palestinian issue is effectively dealt with, no comprehensive, peaceful and lasting solution can be found to the Middle East problem.

The historic agreement between the State of Israel and the PLO a truly remarkable achievement, constitutes the first step towards the long and difficult road to peace. We earnestly hope that the initiative, which culminated in the signing of the Washington accord, will continue unabated and unhindered until the rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people - and those of the other peoples in the region - are fully fulfilled.

Cyprus praises the exemplary efforts that have been shown by all sides in the struggle to secure lasting peace in the area. We urge all parties to continue their current search for a comprehensive solution, which is an indispensable condition for peace, security and prosperity throughout the Middle East.

EGYPT

Mr. Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt

[Original: Arabic]

I am pleased to extend to you and all the members of the Committee my thanks for the great efforts you are exerting in support of the Palestinian people in order to enable it to obtain its legitimate rights, which have been affirmed by international legitimacy in the form of numerous resolutions adopted by the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and for the positive and effective role which you are playing through your persistent endeavours to make the cause of the Palestinian people better known and to promote awareness of its legitimate rights among the international community and the peoples of the world.

We observe this year the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in a different and more favourable climate, a climate of peace which has been propagated in the region by the Palestinian-Israeli agreement on the Declaration of Principles signed at Washington on 13 September 1993. The way is now open for the Palestinian people to recover its legitimate rights, heralding the advent of peace in the Middle East region.

In Egypt, we discovered the road to peace 15 years ago with the Camp David agreement between Egypt and Israel. At that time, and even earlier, we chose the path of peace and we are continuing to push for peace in the belief that, if intentions are pure, the price to be paid for the achievement of peace will not be too high and will bear fruit.

The Declaration of Principles signed on 13 September is therefore a positive and significant step on the road to peace. That road is fraught with difficulties and the accumulated residue of this long period of time. Therefore, the Palestinian people still needs, more than ever, the international community to stand by it as it takes its first steps on the road to peace and the achievement of the desired objective.

At this important juncture in its history, the Palestinian peoples, which is in the process of recovering its legitimate national rights and is preparing to exercise some of those rights in a part of its territory, is in urgent need of the efforts and perseverance of the faithful and of peace-lovers, and of all kinds of assistance in the political, economic and other fields. We in Egypt have vowed our determination to stand by the Palestinian people in its endeavour to achieve its just demands and legitimate rights, which should secure for it a dignified future on the political and economic map of the Middle East and lead eventually to a peaceful, just, comprehensive and lasting solution in the region.

In this connection, we urge your distinguished Committee to continue to exert its efforts and good offices so that the Palestinian people may achieve full freedom on its national territory, including East Jerusalem, and so that this region of the world may once again become a land of tolerance, love, peace and all the lofty notions and values of the three revealed religions that emanated from that region. Let us seize this historic opportunity to achieve peace, and may the ranks of the international community be closed in order to secure the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people as a cornerstone ensuring the success of the peace efforts in the region. The efforts of your distinguished Committee will undoubtedly continue to contribute to the achievement of these noble goals.

We reiterate our constant willingness to cooperate with you on this path, and we wish you great success and fulfilment.

INDIA

Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister of India

The observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People underlines the wish of the Government and people of India to reaffirm their support to the Palestinian people who have been struggling in the past decades for the restoration of its legitimate rights. On this occasion, I would like to reiterate India's continued support for the Palestinian cause.

The signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements on 13 September 1993, was a notable first step towards ensuring peace and stability in Western Asia. We salute the courage of Chairman Yasser Arafat in taking this bold initiative. It is our earnest hope that all the parties involved in the Middle East peace process will seize

this opportunity for the advancement of the cause of peace and for a just and comprehensive settlement that restores to the Palestinian people its legitimate rights.

India, with its historic ties of friendship and socio-cultural links with the Palestinian people, and by its participation in the Middle East peace process, will continue to extend its support for further efforts towards peace in the region. India is also ready to continue to extend material and technical assistance to the friendly Palestinian people to consolidate their progress towards self-government.

IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)

Mr. Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is a suitable opportunity to support once again the legitimate defence and struggle of the Palestinians and to further attract the attention of the world, in order to end oppression of these people and to free them from the domination of usurper Israel.

It may well be that the Palestinians are the main victims of conspiracy and injustice by colonialist Governments who, owing to big power aggression or indulgence, were forced to leave their home and to this day remain homeless. The failure of the Security Council to seriously address the crisis of Palestine and the persistent aggression against the people of Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon, and furthermore, the lack of insistence on the implementation of the Security Council's resolutions in this regard, are typical examples of preferring political interests to peace and security as well as principles of international law.

Israel, by enjoying the support of some powerful countries and without having any concern over the legal consequences of its acts, has not respected the Security Council's resolutions and has continuously pursued its policy of militarism, aggression and occupation.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that any efforts made without consideration for the sacred cause and rights of the Palestinian people will undoubtedly have detrimental effects and consequences on the Palestinian people and the volatile Middle East region and will not pave the way for the eventual solving of the problems in the region.

Once more, the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates its decisive and overall support for the sacred cause and defence of Palestinians against the oppressive acts of the Zionist regime and its occupation of Holy Al-Quds, and this support will continue until the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, self-control over their own faith and liberation of the occupied territories, and Holy Al-Quds in particular, is fulfilled. The Islamic Republic of Iran also believes that a lasting peace would be possible only if the inalienable rights of the Palestinians is restored and an independent Palestinian Government is established in the land of Palestine.

JORDAN

King Hussein Bin Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

[Original: Arabic]

I send to you and the other members of your distinguished Committee my warmest greetings and sincere wishes and appreciation for your welcome efforts in support of the Palestinian Arab people in its legitimate struggle to attain its lofty national goals, namely the exercise of its inalienable rights, first and foremost of which is its right to self-determination on its national soil.

I am pleased, as you observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, to send to you this message, expressing on my own behalf and on behalf of the people and Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, our satisfaction with the positive course being taken by the peace process that began two years ago at Madrid and is still continuing, as well as with the mutual recognition of the PLO and Israel and their signing of the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration

of Principles on 13 September 1993. The head of our delegation has initialled the agenda of the Jordanian-Israeli negotiations in support of the decision of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and in affirmation of our position of support for the objective of achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict, at the heart of which lies the Palestinian question.

These two events constitute a historic transformation, which, if followed up in earnest, may transform the region and its peoples from a situation of conflict, which has depleted its energies and shed the blood of its people, to a situation of peace and stability, which will open new horizons for the peoples of the region and promote a cultural revival based on freedom, respect for human rights, democracy, justice and a life in dignity, peace and security.

As we see it, the current peace process, in its bilateral and multilateral tracks, is a well-established and irrevocable regional and international movement which will lead the region to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace, although our perception of the nature of the conflict and its historical accretions lead us to believe that the process will not be easy. Stumbling blocks along the road to peace are to be expected; however, in our view, they should not constitute obstacles that divert us from progressing along the road of the common good, but rather staging posts that may enrich our dialogue and illuminate our thoughts, so that, having overcome them, we may resume the march and attain the desired objectives.

Therefore, as we seek hope and derive strength from the two historic events of 13 and 14 September 1993, which constitute the first step on the road to success, we should like to stress the importance of the achievement of progress on the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli tracks, so that the tributaries of peace may flow together into a single stream.

Jordan continues to believe firmly in the need to abide by international legitimacy, as expressed by United Nations resolutions, first and foremost of which are Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and by the equation of land for peace. This was the basis of the Jordanian participation in the peace process that began at the Madrid Conference. It was also the basis for the important role which Jordan played in that process, as it provided the necessary protection to the Palestinian people to enable it to demand its legitimate rights and to negotiate on an equal footing with the Israeli side.

Ever since the beginning of the Palestinian question, Jordan has given its support to the fraternal Palestinian Arab people and its struggle to regain its rights. From the beginning, the Jordanian people has shared its daily bread with its Palestinian brothers and joined in their sufferings in the various stages of the conflict. On this occasion, Jordan reiterates its full solidarity with the fraternal Palestinian people and its unlimited support for its just cause until such time as the peace process bears fruit and that people recovers its legitimate rights and is able to determine its own destiny in the manner of all the peoples of the earth.

The United Nations has a central role to play in achieving a peaceful, comprehensive, lasting and just settlement of the Palestinian question, since the international legitimacy on which the current peace process is based rests on the resolutions of this international Organization, which has been entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security. Your distinguished Committee is none other than the embodiment of the will of the international community and the recognition by that community of the injustice and oppression that have been inflicted on the Palestinian people for the past half century and of the need to restore its rights to it so that peace may once again prevail in our region and so that its people may join their efforts in the building of a better future for the coming generations.

I express to you my deep appreciation and hope that you will convey my greetings to the distinguished members of the Committee for their noble efforts in this field.

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Mr. Nouhak Phoumsavanh, President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic

[Original: French]

On the occasion of the celebration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, and on behalf of the Lao Government and people, I should like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to you and to the other members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for the devotion you have demonstrated in carrying out your important tasks.

Recently, events in the Middle East have taken a positive turn. The agreement, which granted autonomy to the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area, signed by the PLO and Israel in Washington on 13 September 1993, was an important step in the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Lao Government and people welcome that first step and express the hope that it will help the parties concerned to create an atmosphere of mutual trust and allow them to reach a lasting and comprehensive solution to their dispute of more than 30 years. Under the determined leadership of the PLO, the Palestinian people has entered a critical phase in its tireless struggle to recover its fundamental national rights. The international community is therefore called upon to take all necessary steps and do everything within its power to help that martyred people exercise its inalienable rights. For their part, the Lao Government and people resolutely reaffirm, on this solemn occasion, their unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people in its determined struggle to ensure the triumph of its just cause.

MALAYSIA

Mr. Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, once again the Government and the people of Malaysia join the international community in reaffirming our resolute support and solidarity with the Palestinian people in its struggle for justice and for their right to their homeland.

Palestine and the question of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East have always been at the forefront of the agenda of the United Nations and other international forums. As long as the Palestinian people continue to be denied their inalienable rights and subjected to political, social, economic and cultural oppression, it remains the sacred duty of the international community to seek justice for the Palestinians.

Like many other members of the United Nations, Malaysia welcomed the Palestinian-Israeli mutual recognition and the peace agreement of 13 September 1993. Malaysia considered the accord as a positive development that would pave the way for a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Numerous challenges and obstacles, however, remain before a final and comprehensive settlement of the issue is attained. We call on Israel to demonstrate its sincerity to ensure the success of the current peace negotiations. We also call on the other States Members of the United Nations to consider rendering assistance to the Palestinians to ensure the success of the peace process. As a demonstration of its support to the peace process, Malaysia, on its part, has made a modest financial contribution to the Palestinians to help them in their new task.

Once again, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Malaysia's support to the Palestinian people in its struggle for its inalienable rights and justice. I wish them all the success in their new endeavour of national reconstruction and development efforts.

MALDIVES

Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of Maldives

The Palestinian cause has always occupied a significant place in the mind and heart of every Maldivian. We have every admiration for our gallant brothers and sisters, the Palestinians, for the courage and determination they have shown in the face of the blatant atrocities that have been committed against them for over a decade.

The Arab-Israeli peace talks that began in 1991 have made remarkable progress. The signing of the Declaration of Principles between the PLO and Israel in Washington in September 1993 is historic. In this context, the Government of Maldives expresses its admiration to the PLO and the people of Palestine for their courage and determination in finding a comprehensive and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine.

The people of Maldives earnestly hope that this agreement will lead to the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, sovereign independence and the establishment of a national homeland on its own soil.

On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the people of Maldives reaffirm their wholehearted support to and solidarity with the brotherly people of Palestine in its just struggle for the restoration of its national homeland and all its inalienable rights. We further renew our commitment to participate in all the efforts which the Islamic world and the larger international community may embark upon with the objective of helping to find a just and permanent settlement of the issue.

MALTA

Mr. Edward Fenech Adami, Prime Minister of Malta

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People has a special significance this year in the light of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, signed in Washington by Israel and the PLO on 13 September 1993.

Malta welcomed this historic step towards the recovery and the full exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

The provisions of the accords, which deal with the initial steps towards Palestinian self-government, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip and Jericho, and the framework of negotiations leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), are an indication that the will towards peace has overcome those obstacles that, until only recently, appeared to be insurmountable.

Sixteen years have elapsed since this day of solidarity was first observed. Sixteen years which witnessed great anguish and suffering for too many people whether living under occupation, in refugee camps, or scattered around the world.

Throughout those years, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, through its activities, has consistently underlined the importance of a just and peaceful settlement that ensures the achievement of the rights of the Palestinian people. Malta remains committed to participate in those activities which can contribute to the endeavours of the United Nations during this important transitional period.

The mobilization of international public opinion about the new challenges that lie ahead and the solidarity required to ensure the successful outcome of the accords signed in Washington demands greater, rather than less commitment.

The people of Palestine have lived through the darkest hours of their history, united in their conviction that the dawning of an era of peace was more than just a dream. It was a tangible hope, which required steadfastness, courage and tenacity. The PLO not only promised, but provided, the necessary leadership during those difficult years.

The path towards peace and the recovery and full exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people is still beset by dangers. Such perils may only be overcome by genuine efforts to translate the spirit of the Washington accords into a concrete and tangible reality.

The international community must continue to monitor, encourage and support such efforts as it has in the past so as to enhance and promote peace, intensify assistance and encourage that constructive engagement in negotiations, which alone can guarantee the full exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

PAKISTAN

Mrs. Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto,
Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

On the auspicious occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I would like to reaffirm Pakistan's consistent policy of support for the just aspirations of the Palestinian people. The long and arduous struggle of the people of Palestine finally seems to be bearing fruit. We would like to assure our Palestinian brothers of our complete solidarity in their efforts to regain their national rights and to assume their rightful place in the comity of nations.

This year the International Day of Solidarity follows the signing of the PLO-Israeli agreement entitled "Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements". This Declaration indeed constitutes a first step towards a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement. It provides modalities for interim self-rule in the occupied Palestinian territories, while acknowledging and reinforcing the obligations of the negotiating parties to address all issues of international concern including, in particular, the status of Jerusalem, the question of Israeli settlements and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

The agreement provides a foundation on which a lasting structure of peace can be built. For this it is important that the parties concerned should continue to pursue the implementation of the agreement in good faith and in a spirit of constructive cooperation. Israel, in particular, should demonstrate greater flexibility and accommodation in the implementation of the agreement. It is our hope that the negotiations will bring comprehensive peace to the region by enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its right to self-determination through the establishment of a homeland of its own.

The United Nations has an important role to play in promoting the implementation of the peace accord. The world body and its specialized agencies should expand their assistance to the Palestinian people to help it rebuild its economy and develop its national institutions. The international community should also come forward with tangible measures of support for the rehabilitation of the Palestinian territories.

QATAR

Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al-Thani, Emir of Qatar

[Original: Arabic]

I am pleased to contribute this message to the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. We believe in the justice of that people's cause and in its right to self-determination, and reiterate our adherence to the principles of freedom and justice which we hope that people may enjoy in the same manner as all the peoples of the world.

We celebrate this occasion this year as the Palestinian question has reached a historic turning point in the form of the agreement reached between the PLO and Israel, which constitutes a first step on the road to a just and lasting settlement based on Security Council resolutions and the principle of land for peace.

The peace process in the Middle East, which enjoys broad international support, must be continued in all earnestness by the parties concerned in order to achieve the desired result, on a practical level, of ending a conflict which has lasted for half a century, during which the valiant Palestinian people has suffered greatly and remained deprived of the basic rights enjoyed by all the peoples of the world in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the international Organization.

We pin great hopes on the peace process, not only on the Palestinian-Israeli track, but on all the other tracks as well, in order that a just and comprehensive peace may thereby be achieved, which preserves the legitimate rights of the countries of the region and the unity and integrity of their national territory, in order that its peoples may achieve the security and stability they desire and on that basis attain economic growth and social development so that they may enjoy a better tomorrow after a conflict which, over past decades, has consumed their energies and wasted many of their resources.

The solidarity of all the peoples with the Palestinian people, exemplified in this annual occasion, has undoubtedly helped to convince all the parties concerned of the necessity of renouncing confrontation and conflict and turning instead to an earnest search for a peaceful, just and comprehensive solution and exerting all efforts to achieve that goal. It is a source of satisfaction to see that the peace efforts have begun to bear fruit. I must therefore, on this occasion, express my thanks and appreciation to the participants in this celebration and to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for their commendable efforts in this regard, and I wish them all further success.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr. Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation

[Original: Russian]

[Addressed to the President of the State of Palestine, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, Mr. Yasser Arafat]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I am pleased to extend to you and to all Palestinians warm congratulations and best wishes.

In 1993, this date is being marked under special circumstances. The historic breakthrough in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations has led to real prospects for establishing peace, stability and cooperation in the Middle East. I am convinced that the PLO leadership is sparing no effort to consolidate and build upon the success achieved and ensure the practical implementation of the agreements with Israel.

For its part, the Russian Federation will continue to promote, by all possible means, progress in the process of bringing about a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. We support the Palestinians in their noble aspiration to create proper living conditions for their people and are prepared to provide them with all-round assistance and support in this crucial stage in efforts to solve the Palestinian problem.

I wish you health and happiness and the Palestinian people progress and prosperity.

SENEGAL

Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal

[Original: French]

We celebrate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People this year at a historic moment, as a new era dawns over Palestine and the Middle East, the harbinger of which first appeared on 13 September 1993, at Washington, with the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, including its Annexes and its Agreed Minutes, by the PLO and the Government of the State of Israel.

This important Declaration, which was preceded by mutual recognition of Israel and the PLO, is leading the troubled history of the region in a new and unprecedented direction as a result of the collective efforts of the international community and the clarity of vision of the Palestinian and Israel negotiators.

This significant development in the search for a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine affords me an opportunity to express my heartfelt congratulations once again to all those who have contributed to this agreement.

In this crucial phase of the peace process, much remains to be done and it is essential that the provisions of the Washington agreement be strictly applied. The achievements on which the international community has founded so many hopes for a settlement of the Palestinian question - and thus of the Arab-Israeli conflict - based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), must be made irreversible.

It is important that this new impetus for peace be accompanied and strengthened by similar progress in other Arab-Israeli negotiations so that the Middle East may finally enjoy general peace.

It is for these reasons that today, more than ever before, the region's leaders, and especially the leaders of the PLO, need the vigilant support of all peace- and justice-loving countries. Accordingly, the United Nations must be prepared to assume fully its responsibility regarding the question of Palestine until the matter has been permanently resolved, and must increase its assistance to the Palestinian people with a view to the reconstruction of the Palestinian economic and social infrastructure.

I therefore welcome the recent initiatives taken in that area by the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and by many States and organizations, and hope that their support for the efforts of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People may yield the desired results.

My congratulations and support are extended also to NGOs and all people of goodwill throughout the world who effectively support the noble cause of Palestine.

I am sure that strengthening and increasing auspicious initiatives of this type during the transition period will help to mobilize the international community in support of strict implementation of the Washington agreement and full realization of the rights of the Palestinian people in a region at peace within itself.

Senegal, whose active solidarity with its Palestinian brothers has never wavered, will continue to work for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the crisis in the Middle East and, more specifically, of the question of Palestine.

On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I hope that a wind of freedom and peace may continue to blow across the Middle East forever, so that the peoples of all the States of the region may at last work together to forge their own destiny and the destiny of future generations in security, solidarity and mutual understanding.

SPAIN

Mr. Felipe Gonzalez, Prime Minister of Spain

[Original: Spanish]

I have pleasure in sending you my most cordial congratulations and wishes for success on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, 29 November.

As you know, the peace process in the Middle East, which began at the Madrid Conference in November 1991, was given new force and entered a decisive stage after the signing, on 13 September 1993, of the Washington agreement. It should therefore be reiterated that the establishment of a future peace will necessarily involve the effective exercise by the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination.

SRI LANKA

Mr. D. B. Wijetunga, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

On behalf of the Government and the people of Sri Lanka, I am happy to join the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. I do so at a time of considerable hope and promise.

The signing of the historic Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements on 13 September 1993, by the PLO and Israel, is a first step which could reverse decades of conflict and confrontation in the Middle East.

The question of Palestine is the core of the Middle East problem. Sri Lanka has steadfastly held the view that an enduring peace in the Middle East is not possible without the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

The Declaration of 13 September shows the courage and wisdom of both parties. It is important that progress on all the complex issues involved in the peace process now initiated be steadily advanced. The process needs the encouragement of the international community.

Now that the political will is there, it is our hope that a just and equitable settlement would soon be possible, enabling all States in the region, including Israel, to live and develop in conditions of peace and security.

SURINAME

Mr. Runaldo R. Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Government and people of the Republic of Suriname reiterate their firm support for and solidarity with the Palestinian people in its struggle for true and lasting peace. We welcome the promising developments in the relations between Israel and the Palestinian people, which have culminated in the signing of the peace agreement between the Government of Israel and the PLO.

It is our earnest hope that these developments will lead to a final solution of the Palestinian problem, based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant United Nations resolutions, so that the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people can be safeguarded.

THAILAND

Mr. Chuan Leekpai, Prime Minister of Thailand

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I wish to reiterate once again, on behalf of the Government and the people of Thailand, our firm support for the just and legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

Thailand has long supported the constructive efforts towards a comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian problem on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as other relevant United Nations resolutions. My Government is pleased to see that substantial progress has been made this year towards the settlement of the Palestinian problem.

1993 is a landmark year for the peace process in the Middle East. We are hopeful that the strong momentum for peace created in Washington on 13 September 1993, between the leaders of Israel and the PLO, will be maintained. To the surprise of even the optimists, a comprehensive, just and durable settlement of the Palestinian problem is now within reach. Although substantial problems remain to be resolved, my Government is hopeful that the existing political will for peace among the parties concerned will ensure that these problems are resolved effectively and peacefully.

I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the invaluable work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. As an observer, Thailand is ready to do whatever it can to support the Committee's commendable endeavours.

TUNISIA

Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia

[Original: Arabic]

The observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People coincides this year with a first important and encouraging step towards consolidating the desired just peace in the Middle East region, in the form of the recognition by Israel of the PLO, the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and the signing of the agreement on the Declaration of Principles between the two sides on 13 September 1993, at Washington.

On this day of profound significance, we convey our greetings to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and commend its ongoing efforts to reaffirm Palestinian rights in preparation for their consecration and international recognition. Our solidarity and commitment has been manifest in support of the perseverant and noble efforts which the United Nations and its agencies are exerting, in particular UNRWA, to alleviate the suffering of the struggling Palestinian people in the interior and in exile, to give prominence to the tragedy of the Palestinians labouring under the yoke of occupation, and to provide the solidarity and support they deserve in accordance with the principles of justice and fairness.

The lengthy and bitter conflict in the Middle East, and the related exemplary punishments, the evictions, the attempts at eradication and marginalization and the violation of the most basic human rights, have not succeeded in making the Palestinian people despair of recovering its legitimate position among the peoples of the world and have not extinguished the firebrand of its struggle to rid itself of the flagrant injustice inflicted upon it. It has found in our international Organization, and in particular in the General Assembly, an outstanding advocate to transmit its voice to the international community and to gain the support of all those who uphold the principles of justice and freedom of peoples to exercise self-determination.

It is a matter for optimism and hope that we are today witnessing the beginning of a transformation in which the Palestinian question is entering a new era based on dialogue, negotiation and mutual recognition, rather than on a policy of tyranny, force and the logic of confrontation, as it proceeds towards the establishment of new relations on a basis of peaceful coexistence, equal rights and a foundation of justice and legality.

In this connection, we should like to draw attention to the maturity, the experience and the feeling of responsibility that has characterized the manner in which the Palestinian resistance movement has addressed the peace process, which must lead to the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for freedom, independence and the achievement of a peaceful and comprehensive solution that ensures the liberation of the occupied Arab territories and the restoration of their rights to the legitimate owners.

Just as the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People is justified in congratulating itself on this earnest step on the road to peace, so the Committee, and the international community as a whole, are called upon to work with perseverance and determination to promote and ensure the success of that step by supporting the establishment of a national Palestinian entity on the territory of Palestine and by redoubling efforts to rebuild what has been destroyed by long decades of occupation and conflict, in order to complete the remaining stages of this process in order that we may thereby give peace a real chance so that it may be embodied in a soundly-based regime of security and stability, free from all forms of persecution and from violations of the rights of peoples.

The United Nations, which has played a fundamental role in eliminating colonialism and is playing an effective role in upholding human rights, is called upon, now more than ever, to help the Palestinian people to achieve self-determination on its national soil and to exercise its national and human rights fully and without exception.

Tunisia has always striven to follow the peace efforts closely and to work with conviction and perseverance to provide all support to the achievement of this noble goal, in fulfilment of its commitment to international legitimacy and its principled support of the Palestinian people in its just struggle and its backing for all liberation movements in the world.

We therefore reiterate to the international community, as represented by the United Nations, that we shall continue to exert all efforts in the process of consolidating a lasting, just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East region, which will consecrate the established and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as well as in favour of stability and peace in the world. We wish the distinguished Committee every success in its ongoing efforts to assist the Palestinian people and to contribute to the achievement of peace and security.

TURKEY

Mrs. Tansu Ciller, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, it is a pleasure for me to reiterate our continuing firm support for the Palestinian people in attaining its legitimate rights. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has been successful over the years in promoting wider awareness within the international community for the plight of the Palestinian people, thus contributing to the creation of a stronger sympathy and support for its legitimate cause. From the very beginning, Turkey supported the Palestinians in their just struggle. We also support the Middle East peace process based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), this being the only realistic way to settle the long-lasting dispute. We regard the recent breakthrough in the ongoing peace process as an important development that heralds the establishment of peace and the attainment of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

Today, the Palestinian people, more than ever, require the assistance of the international community. Turkey, for her part, has once again expressed her readiness to join in the international efforts to provide the Palestinian people with the necessary assistance at the Washington Pledging Conference. I take this opportunity to reiterate the best wishes of the Turkish nation and the Turkish Government to the Palestinian people in its determined efforts for the realization of its legitimate aspirations within the framework of a just and lasting peace in the region.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahayan, President of the United Arab Emirates

[Original: Arabic]

I am pleased, on behalf of the Government and people of the United Arab Emirates, to address to you personally, and to the members of your distinguished Committee, thanks and appreciation for your strenuous and persevering efforts to assist the Palestinian people in its struggle to achieve its international goals and aspirations. We should also like to convey to you our appreciation and admiration for your unflagging perseverance in bearing this noble and historic responsibility.

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, we should also like to reaffirm to you our solidarity with that struggling people and our full support for it in its just fight and honourable struggle for freedom and independence.

One of the results of your efforts to acquaint the world with the justice of the cause of that people, which has suffered greatly from the oppression of the Israeli occupation and the indignity of the displacement caused by Israel, has been to give a strong impetus to the international community to launch a serious initiative for the resolution of the Palestinian question. That initiative resulted in the holding of the peace Conference at Madrid and the subsequent bilateral and multilateral negotiations. For our part, we supported the convening of that Conference and participated in the multilateral negotiations.

We hope that all the tracks of those negotiations will lead to a peaceful, just, full and lasting settlement of the Middle East question, the heart of which is the Palestinian question, on the basis of a withdrawal by Israel from all the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and the recovery by the Palestinian people of its legitimate rights including the right to self-determination.

We note with satisfaction, and indeed wish to commend, the political flexibility and the strength which characterized the Palestinian position immediately before the meeting of the Conference, during the Conference and during the subsequent negotiations.

We have been gratified by the success achieved in the form of the Declaration of Principles signed by the PLO and Israel on 13 September 1993. We see that agreement as a positive beginning and a step on the way to a just, comprehensive and lasting solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian question on the basis of international legitimacy and the principles of international law and United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 238 (1973), and the principle of land for peace. We also see it as a first step towards the achievement of a full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan and Jerusalem, and the

guaranteeing of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its legitimate and inalienable national rights, including the right to self-determination.

Until such time as a full settlement is achieved under which the Palestinian people recovers all its rights, we the Government and people of the United Arab Emirates shall remain bound by our vow and commitment to provide all possible help and assistance to that people. That is a vow we have made to ourselves and a commitment we have assumed to serve as our guideline. We are fully confident that, God willing, the day will come when the Palestinian people will return to its land to exercise its rights and to live in freedom in the same manner as the other peoples of the world.

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

Mr. Ali Hassan Mwinyi, President of the United Republic of Tanzania

On this day of solidarity with the Palestinian people, the United Republic of Tanzania wishes to reaffirm its unflinching support for all Palestinians in their struggle for their right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State.

This year's observance has a special meaning for the struggling Palestinian people, the Arab people, and the international community, in particular the United Nations. For it takes place against the backdrop of the historic signing, on 13 September 1993, of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements between the PLO and the Government of Israel.

The United Republic of Tanzania welcomes this positive development in which the Palestinians and Israelis, for years sworn enemies, have recognized each other. We hope that this agreement will provide a further impetus to the search for a just and permanent settlement of the Palestinian question on the basis of the Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and other relevant United Nations resolutions. We also hope that it will spur the parallel efforts for a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and permit the establishment of peace and cooperation between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

We urge the international community, in particular the United Nations, to lend every support to the PLO and Israel in the implementation of the agreement. We also urge the international community to intensify its support and assistance to the Palestinian people in order to enable them to make up for lost time in their socio-economic development and to address the problem of the suffering of millions of Palestinian refugees in unacceptable conditions in the occupied territories as well as living in exile in neighbouring Arab countries. In this regard, the United Republic of Tanzania welcomes the efforts of the Secretary-General in assisting the peace process and in mobilizing assistance and support for reconstruction.

In conclusion, I would like, on my own behalf as well as that of the Government and people of the United Republic of Tanzania, to extend to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and especially to its Chairman, our appreciation of the Committee's work.

VIET NAM

Mr. Le Duc Anh, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, 29 November, I would like to extend to you and, through you, to all Palestine people, our greetings of solidarity and warmest congratulations. Together with peoples all over the world, we welcome the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements by the PLO and the Government of Israel. Although there remain many difficulties and obstacles, the above-mentioned agreement constitutes a positive step towards the solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Middle East problem, thus opening up the prospect for peaceful settlements of other issues in the Arab-Israeli conflict. We believe that the parties concerned should continue to step up their negotiations for an early comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East, ensuring the inalienable fundamental national rights of the Palestinian people.

The Vietnamese people have always supported the just cause of the Palestinian people and have strongly believed that with the tradition of courageous struggle, and with the sympathy and support from the world's peoples, the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the PLO, will certainly achieve success.

ZIMBABWE

Comrade Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe

[Addressed to the Chairman of the PLO and President of the State of Palestine, Mr. Yasser Arafat]

It gives me great honour and joy to write to you on the important matter of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, 29 November 1993.

This year, more than in any other year before, we are full of expectation about the future of the peoples of Palestine, especially since the signing of the Declaration of Principles at Washington on 13 September 1993. It is no longer a dream that your people and the Israelis can live in peace; you have given yourselves the challenge to work for peace as you pursue the realization of Palestinian freedom and statehood.

I should like you to know that the Government and people of the Republic of Zimbabwe join me in congratulating you on this historic day, and heartily pledge their continued support of you in your sacred quest for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

It is also my personal wish that you and I may meet to share the fuller meaning of these momentous developments in the Middle East.

B. Messages from Governments

ARGENTINA

[Original: Spanish]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Argentine Government wishes to reiterate its satisfaction with the historic agreement reached last September, at Washington, by the representatives of the Palestinian people and the Government of Israel.

This agreement represents a momentous and historic step forward in the peace process in the Middle East. We wish to draw attention to the courage and vision of the Palestinian and Israeli leaders who, despite great difficulties, have chosen the path leading to a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Argentine Government wishes to reaffirm once more, its support for the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-government in its own territory and the right of all the States of the region to live within secure and internationally recognized boundaries.

The Argentine Government also wishes to repeat its firm support for Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) as the basis for a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement for all the parties directly involved.

GUYANA

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Government and people of Guyana are pleased to extend their warmest and best wishes for the successful conclusion of the current process to the resolution of a heretofore intractable problem.

In this new era of dialogue and cooperation, officially sanctioned by the September 1993 exchange of letters of mutual recognition between the Government of Israel and the PLO and the subsequent signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, it is earnestly hoped that remaining differences will be settled and age-old animosities will be buried.

The Government and people of Guyana remain conscious that the scars inflicted by the protracted struggle are deep and real, and that only time will heal them. But the same dogged determination that has attended the struggle may be turned to good account in speeding up the process.

It is the sincere hope of the Government and people of Guyana that the time will not be too distant when congratulations on the successful conclusion of the process will be in order.

SAUDI ARABIA

The Government of Saudi Arabia is pleased to convey that it commemorates this day by giving total coverage to this occasion every year, through the Ministry of Information, in all news programmes, articles and exposés, with emphasis on solidarity with the Palestinian people and its legitimate cause, and support for the peace process, with special emphasis on the role of the United Nations resolutions, which were the hallmark in the struggle of the Palestinian people to realize its inalienable rights.

C. Messages from Ministers for Foreign Affairs

ALGERIA

Mr. Mohamed-Salah Dembri, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: French]

This year, observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People comes at a crucial time in the struggle of that people for the exercise of its inalienable national rights. Since 1974, the United Nations, which has been involved with the Palestinian question - the central element of the Middle East crisis - from the outset, has followed the return to historical prominence of a people whose heroic resistance and sacrifices have earned it recognition of its right to live.

The signing of the Declaration of Principles, on 13 September 1993, marks a significant step forward in the Palestinian people's long march towards the fulfilment of its national destiny in its homeland and a substantial development in the effort to build a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Israel's recognition of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and the determination of the Palestinian leadership and the Palestinian people to found their State in Palestinian territory, soon to be liberated from foreign occupation, show that the realization of the inalienable national rights, with which your Committee is identified, will henceforth be an inseparable part of the history of the Middle East.

On this memorable day, Algeria, which has taken note of the recent developments and has called for unity within the Palestinian ranks in order to ensure continued progress in the peace process, salutes the fraternal Palestinian people and the Organization which embodies its struggle and expresses its aspirations. Algeria also commends the activities of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and wishes to thank the fraternal State of Senegal for having had faith in a just cause and for having appointed eminent sons of Africa to this Committee, whose very existence symbolizes the ongoing responsibility of the United Nations vis-à-vis Palestine and the Palestinian people.

BRAZIL

Mr. Celso Luiz Nunes Amorim, Minister for External Relations

On behalf of the Government and people of Brazil, I wish to extend my warmest congratulations on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

This year's observance of the Day of Solidarity has accrued significance, as the recent signing of the Declaration of Principles between Israel and the PLO augurs well for the full exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

Brazil reaffirms its steadfast support for the quest for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East to be attained through the fulfillment of the legitimate Palestinian aspirations to self-determination and nationhood.

It is the intention of the Government of Brazil to join the international community's efforts in assisting the creation of an environment conducive to the smooth implementation of the steps foreseen in the Declaration of Principles. In particular, we call on all States to actively participate in the United Nations initiatives, as contained in the report of the Secretary-General's task force, for the promotion of the economic development of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

CHILE

Mr. Enrique Silva Cimma, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Spanish]

On the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I should like once again, in the name of the President of the Republic of Chile, Mr. Patricio Aylwin Azócar, and of his Government, to express to you our most cordial greetings.

The Government of Chile has pleasure in confirming its satisfaction with the vitally important agreement signed at Washington on 13 September 1993, by the PLO and the Government of Israel, which represents a significant step forward in the peace process in the Middle East. We should also like to reiterate our trust in the United Nations and its ability to help find appropriate solutions for a just and lasting peace in that region.

Wishing you every success during your term of office, especially as regards the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I take this opportunity to convey to you the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

COLOMBIA

Ms. Noemí Sanín de Rubio, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Spanish]

On the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, may I ask you to use your high office to convey to the Palestinian people the friendship and solidarity of the Colombian nation.

You are well aware, Mr. Chairman, of the interest with which my Government has followed developments in the process that is putting new life into the Palestinian cause. We have noted with satisfaction the positive steps recently taken towards the noble aspiration of the Palestinian people to have their own State and that of the international community to achieve a just and lasting peace for the region of the Middle East.

GREECE

Mr. Karolos Papoulias, Minister for Foreign Affairs

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, Greece, first of all, would like to pay tribute to the courage, which has been acknowledged by the whole of the international community, of the Palestinian leadership to take the brave step and wise decision to sign the Declaration of Principles of 13 September 1993.

Greece realizes, with deep satisfaction, that the signing of this agreement could bring to the Palestinian people, who have suffered much, the blessings of peace.

The Palestinian leadership has shown the whole world that even long-lasting hostility and prejudice can be put aside when the future of the generations to come is at stake.

Greece is of the opinion that the Palestinian people will be able to forget the painful past and will now start to feel the benefits of living in peace and security, thus creating the conditions for the achievement of rapid improvements in living standards and economic prospects.

Greece, both bilaterally and within the context of the common effort of the European Union, and of course in her capacity as the coming President of the European Union, will contribute in every possible way, so that the results of the peace agreement will be permanent, progress will be made towards a final and just peace in the region, and the great expectations of the Palestinian people will not disappointed.

Greece will also contribute, to the extent of her capabilities, in the efforts to overcome the existing difficulties, while underlining at the same time the trust that the Palestinian people should have in the agreement and the prospects and expectations to which it has given rise.

Finally, Greece expresses the hope that the benefits of peace will very soon be apparent and that the Palestinian people, with the support of the international community, will continue to show the same courage in the quest for a peaceful future.

GUINEA

Mr. Ibrahima Sylla, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

[Original: French]

As the international community prepares to observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, it is an honour and a legitimate source of pride for me to state once again my country's unconditional and long-standing support for the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people to regain its inalienable rights to freedom and a national home in the land of its ancestors. We salute the recent accords reached at Washington between Israel and the PLO, and we are hopeful that the same spirit of cooperation will prevail in future negotiations for the liberation of all the occupied Arab territories, so that this part of the world, which is so lovely, may at last overcome the torment caused by so many decades of conflict and despair. You may be certain that my country will stand ready at all times to make its own modest contribution, both in the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, of which it is a member, and in other international forums, with a view to helping the Palestinian people begin at last the reconstruction of its homeland for the well-being of all its sons.

JAPAN

Mr. Tsutomu Hata, Minister for Foreign Affairs

On behalf of the Japanese Government, I would like to express my sense of celebration on this sixteenth United Nations International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

In October 1991, a great step was made towards the achievement of peace in the Middle East, when all the countries involved in the conflict met in one place, at Madrid. And September of this year, with the mutual recognition of the PLO and Israel, brought an historical achievement: the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements in the West Bank and Gaza. I personally had the honour of witnessing that ceremony.

I hope that this achievement will have a positive influence on the ongoing peace talks and that a comprehensive peace agreement will be reached as soon as possible.

Japan has worked to contribute to the progress of the Middle East peace talks. These efforts have been directed towards building confidence among the nations involved, through the multilateral talks, dialogue between the parties concerned in the peace process and economic assistance in the economic and social development of the region. As a part of these efforts, in view of the difficult economic and social circumstances of the Palestinian people, and also keeping in mind its future interim self-rule, we have taken and will continue to take a strong initiative in providing assistance to the Palestinian people.

Japan has decided, in order to help insure the implementation of the agreement between the PLO and Israel, to provide approximately $200 million over the coming two years. This assistance will include grant aid for food and medicines as well as concessional loans for the building of the infrastructure.

Japan will maintain its active commitment to helping promote the peace process.

I will conclude this message by expressing my hopes for the Palestinian people: that its living conditions be improved and that a comprehensive and lasting peace agreement be achieved as quickly and fairly as possible.

LEBANON

Mr. Fares Boueiz, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Arabic]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I reiterate on behalf of the Government and people of Lebanon, our continuing and complete solidarity with the fraternal Palestinian people in its efforts to achieve its legitimate national goals of self-determination in its territory, in the same manner as the other peoples of the region.

Recent developments call for further steps to reaffirm the legal and historical constants which have governed the Palestinian question ever since its inception and which have been reaffirmed by successive General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and numerous international conferences and bodies.

The Palestinians are continuing to suffer from a denial of their human rights and they will still need much struggle, effort, patience and sacrifice in order to deal with the historical oppression and arbitrary rule to which they have been subjected by the colonialist Israeli occupation. That situation requires mutual assistance and a sound alliance with the fraternal Arab peoples, which have considered Palestine to be their foremost cause ever since the turn of the century. It also makes it necessary to revitalize and give impetus to international support, which is based on the principles of justice, fairness and the law, in order to counterbalance the effects of the fait accompli policy of Israel and its allies on the political equation of the existing process for a peaceful solution.

Lebanon, which believes in a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region, reiterates on this occasion the need to achieve progress in the peace process on all tracks by a commitment to implement Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), now that two years have elapsed since the start of that process. That should consolidate and strengthen what has been achieved by the Palestinian people through its sacrifices, and it is the only way to achieve a better tomorrow full of promise for all the peoples and States of the region.

The Lebanese people, which has made and is continuing to make great sacrifices in support of the rights of the Palestinian people to return and exercise self-determination in its national territory, is confident of the ability of that people to impose its presence on the map of the Middle East and to reaffirm its effective and creative role in the development and transformation of the region into an oasis of peace and prosperity, given the opportunity to exercise its legitimate rights.

We send greetings of esteem and appreciation to all those who have persevered in supporting the rights of the Palestinian people and in particular to the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in the hope that their objectives and the objectives of all of us may be realized through the bringing of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace to the Middle East region by the recognition of the legitimate rights of all its peoples, and in particular the Palestinian people.

LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA

Mr. Omar Mustafa Muntasser, Secretary of the General People's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation

[Original: Arabic]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which is saluted by the peoples of the United Nations and its international and regional organizations, and in recognition of the just struggle being waged by the Palestinian people for the liberation of its territory, for self-determination and for the building of an independent State, I salute you and commend the great efforts which the United Nations has exerted since its foundation in aid of the Palestinian cause and of liberation movements around the world in general.

The Palestinian question has attracted great international interest within the United Nations and has been the subject of numerous resolutions. Despite that, the Israelis are continuing to flout United Nations resolutions and the Palestinian people has thus far been unable to exercise its inalienable rights or to establish an independent State despite its 44-year-long struggle. During this lengthy period, it has been subjected to base acts of oppression carried out by the occupation authorities in open defiance of all international laws, resolutions and instruments, and in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The United Nations has addressed the Palestinian question and has adopted numerous resolutions thereon. However, the intransigence and obstinacy of the Israelis has been a constant obstacle to the implementation of these resolutions, all of which uphold the inalienable and legitimate right of the Palestinian people to return home and to exercise self-determination.

Despite international efforts to bring about a peaceful solution of the conflict in the Middle East, the Israelis have not relinquished their extremist positions and have continued to carry out acts of oppression and to establish illegal settlements in the occupied territory.

The United Nations is called upon, today more than ever, to work to implement its resolutions on the question of Palestine with the same attention and sincerity, and to take the necessary preventive measures to ensure respect for international legitimacy and the equality of all, in order that this Organization may enjoy the credibility it deserves and apply the same standards to all.

Despite the fact that recent times have witnessed several developments regarding the Palestinian question, my country believes that the solution of the Palestinian question is an issue that falls on the shoulders of the United Nations, the international Organization that was entrusted with the task of maintaining international peace and security in a manner that guarantees the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to exercise self-determination, to return to its territory and to establish a State in Palestine in which Arabs and Jews may live on an equal footing. If that cannot be achieved, peace will not come to the region and there will be a continuation of the conflict, which threatens international peace and security.

We salute and support the struggle of the Palestinian people to defend its legitimate national rights and we reiterate our solidarity with its heroic struggle to resist the aggression that has made its life a hell of suffering and persecution.

In conclusion, my country expresses its appreciation and gratitude for the efforts that have been and are continuing to be made by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. We are convinced that the Palestinian people, through its struggle and valour will achieve its desired goals of freedom and independence, however long that may take.

OMAN

Mr. Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Arabic]

First of all, I am pleased to commend the efforts of your distinguished Committee, which, since it was established in 1975, has exerted its utmost efforts in order to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its legitimate rights in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. I should like to take this opportunity to thank you and the other members of the Committee for your efforts in this regard.

The Palestinian and Israeli leaders have shown exceptional courage and have accomplished a great deed, which, for the first time since the beginning of the Arab-Israeli conflict, provides a real opportunity for arriving at a solution to the heart of this conflict, which is the Palestinian question. Without a doubt, what has been achieved at the Palestinian-Israeli level, as an initial step in the right direction towards a comprehensive and just solution of this question, will have a positive impact on the course of the other negotiations under way between Israel and the Arab States concerned.

For a century, the Palestinian people has suffered from the tragedies of displacement and occupation. Today, as this people celebrates the historic agreement between the PLO and Israel and their mutual recognition, it looks to the United Nations, which has played an important and prominent role in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, to assume the role required of it in this regard in order that the Palestinian people may reap the fruits of this historic agreement in the form of projects of economic and social benefit that promote the development of the various Palestinian institutions and agencies; this, in turn, should arouse hope and implant ideals of peace in the hearts of men.

The efforts of the international community aimed at achieving stability in this important part of the world have begun to bear fruit. We are, therefore, called upon to work together to achieve the desired peace, on the basis of the mutual interests, rights and benefits of all the parties, the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace.

We are facing a great challenge, and yet the sincere humanitarian desire to achieve and consolidate peace is greater than this challenge. Therefore, we have not the slightest doubt that our region will shortly witness the beginning of the comprehensive and just peace which began to break forth with the dawn of the new world order.

In conclusion, I thank you once again and assure you that my country will do everything to exert its finest efforts in order to strengthen positive cooperation and to ensure stability and prosperity in the whole world.

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

Mr. Farouq Al-Sharaa, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Arabic]

The Syrian Arab Republic joins you in celebrating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and its legitimate struggle to recover its inalienable national rights in implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 45/67 of 6 December 1990. We are pleased on this occasion to renew our greetings to the Palestinian people, which is continuing its struggle in the occupied territory to recover its legitimate rights and to end the Israeli occupation.

The Palestinian people, whose territory has been occupied by Israel and from which millions of Palestinians have been forced to emigrate and have been dispersed in the neighbouring Arab countries and in various regions of the world for half a century, cannot accept a solution that does not guarantee its right of return to its homeland and its right to self-determination on its national soil, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. This people, with its longing and constant aspiration for peace, like the other Arab peoples, believes that true peace cannot be built on occupied territories nor on the basis of violated rights.

The Syrian Arab Republic has always considered the Palestinian question to be at the centre of the Arab-Israeli conflict and has made great sacrifices and lost tens of thousands of martyrs in this cause, to whose principles it has always remained faithful and for which it has rejected all initiatives and solutions that did not provide for a global solution and the participation of the Palestinians as well as the other Arab parties. The Syrian Arab Republic endorsed the Peace Conference at Madrid only once it had received assurances regarding the participation of the Palestinians and the global nature of a solution on all fronts, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), and the principle of land for peace. The Syrian Arab Republic, whose history is linked with the defence of the Palestinian cause and the rights of the Palestinian people, remains more than ever determined to continue to work for the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace, which guarantees a withdrawal by Israel from all the occupied Arab territories and secures the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people.

I therefore salute the efforts of your distinguished Committee in support of the struggle of the Palestinian people and I look forward with you to the day on which the region will be blessed with a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, which will spare its peoples the calamities of wars and destruction, and by which they will achieve security, stability and prosperity.

UKRAINE

Mr. Anatoliy M. Zlenko, Minister for Foreign Affairs

I sincerely greet you on the occasion of observing the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

This year has been marked by the beginning of a qualitatively new stage in the history of the Palestinian people. As a result of the agreement between Israel and the PLO on the Declaration of Principles, signed at Washington on 13 September 1993, new elements in the nature of a compromise and stabilization have appeared in the Middle East settlement, which will undoubtedly change the configuration of the region in the near future. Ukraine considers the agreement as an initial and important step in achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, a step towards unblocking the core problem in the Arab-Israeli conflict - the Palestinian one.

In this context the Committee is facing urgent tasks of adopting trends of its activity to requirements of the new realities of today. Decisions of the Committee should be oriented towards removing confrontation and ideological divergences, towards establishing a favourable atmosphere for achieving agreements between the participants in the negotiations.

Ukraine, as a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, stands for the earliest solution to the problems of economic development of the Palestinian people and welcomes more active efforts by the world community in this direction.

Availing itself of this opportunity, Ukraine reconfirms its unfailing willingness to promote the search for a peace formula in the region in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

D. Messages from intergovernmental organizations with observer status at the United Nations

ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

Mr. Hamid Algabid, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference

The international community has confirmed, through General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977 designating the twenty-ninth of November every year as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, its support for the inalienable rights of that people and the necessity of providing it with all forms of support in its just struggle aimed at restoring its rights and living in freedom and dignity on its land, in accordance with the resolutions of international legality.

On this occasion, I have the pleasure, on behalf of OIC, to express thanks and appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its ceaseless efforts, which it continues to exert under your sagacious chairmanship, in order to spread consciousness of the legitimacy of the cause and rights of the Palestinian people as well as to mobilize more support and assistance to it in all fields. I also avail myself on this occasion to express thanks and appreciation to the United Nations and all its organs for its continuous efforts to support the Palestinian people and its just cause.

Since the launching of the Middle East peace process over two years ago, OIC has affirmed its support to this process which aims at achieving a just and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine and the conflict in the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the land-for-peace formula, as well as the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The cause of Palestine and Al-Quds al-Sharif remains at the forefront of the concerns of OIC and its member States.

Observing the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People this year comes amid new developments in the Middle East region. We have recently witnessed a highly important positive development in the peace process, which is the achievement of a Declaration of Principles on procedures for self-rule in the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel's recognition of the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. The United States administration has also resumed dialogue with the PLO; Jordan and Israel have signed an agreement regarding the agenda of the Jordanian-Israeli negotiations.

Here I would like to laud the wise leadership of the Palestinian people and the courageous decision taken by President Yasser Arafat, which is considered a big step on the road to achieving a comprehensive and just settlement, and ensuring the rights of the Palestinian people.

While welcoming such positive developments, which it considers as a serious step towards realizing a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East that will enable the Palestinian people to restore its inalienable national rights, and to recover the occupied territories, OIC affirms its commitment to the cause of Al-Quds al-Sharif, with all that it stands for in the eyes of the Islamic Ummah, such as religious, historical and ideological values, and the necessity of restoring the city to Palestinian sovereignty.

OIC affirms its adherence to all United Nations resolutions that call for realizing the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, halting settlements and Israel's withdrawal from Palestinian and Arab territories occupied in 1967, including Al-Quds al-Sharif. It affirms the necessity of achieving progress in the Lebanese and Syrian tracks, which would ensure total Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories and ensure a final, just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. We also see the necessity of a major role for the United Nations and its organs in the peace process and that the United Nations should shoulder its complete responsibility, in all fields, for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, implementation of the relevant international resolutions, and support for the peace process, as well as the agreements concluded between the parties concerned, as a way of guaranteeing and executing such agreements.

Moreover, we request that these positive developments be reflected in the situation in the occupied territories by halting acts of repression and inhuman procedures on the part of the Israeli occupation authorities, releasing all detainees and stopping violations of Palestinian human rights.

The Palestinian people have suffered long years of occupation, repression and denial of the exercise of its national rights. Now that a new dawn has broken forth in the Middle East and the time has come to reap the fruits of the Palestinian struggle, the international community is called upon, especially on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, to affirm this solidarity and extend all forms of support to this people until it is able to live in freedom and dignity in the land of its fathers and forefathers, restore its inalienable rights and establish its independent State on its national soil, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital.

More than a quarter of a century of Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories has led to serious deterioration of the economic and living conditions of the Palestinian people as well as to poor public services, educational institutions and others.

Establishing a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East requires uniting the efforts of the international community and mobilizing its energies in order to ensure security and peace in the region, which constitute a major support for international peace and security. This may be realized through consolidating Palestinian authority over all the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Al-Quds al-Sharif, and extending all forms of support to the Palestinian people. It is incumbent upon all of us during this crucial period to continue extending all types of assistance to the PLO to enable it to confront the coming phase and establish its authority and national institutions. This requires the international community to extend support in the economic and material spheres, and all other fields, to the Palestinian people, until it launches the process of reconstructing its national economy and rebuilding its infrastructure.

In conclusion, I would like on this occasion, and on behalf of OIC, to hail the glorious Palestinian people while affirming the solidarity of the Islamic ummah with it in its just and legitimate struggle under its legitimate and sole representative, the PLO, until it is able to restore its inalienable national rights, including its right to return and to self-determination, and to establish its independent Palestinian State on its national soil, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital.

E. Messages from national liberation organizations

PAN AFRICANIST CONGRESS OF AZANIA

Mr. S.E.M. Pheko, Chief Representative to the United Nations

On behalf of PAC, the true custodian of the national aspirations and fundamental interests of the dispossessed people of Azania, it is an honour for me to convey fraternal greetings to the Palestinian people. I should also like to extend deepest appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its noble role in the liberation of Palestine.

The people of Azania share many common things with the people of Palestine. For instance, before 20 September 1909, there was no country in the southern tip of Africa called "South Africa", but Azania. Equally in the Middle East, there had always been Palestine until 1948.

The people of Palestine and the people of Azania were betrayed by the same colonial power - Great Britain. The people of Palestine were robbed of their land. The people of Azania were also robbed of their land. The fundamental contradiction in both Azania and Palestine is that they were deprived of their lands and their national sovereignty, usurped by force of arms. Ever since this tragedy took place, the people of Palestine and Azania have been subjected to the peace of the grave. The oppressors of the Palestinians and those of the Azanians have been very violent and continue to commit genocide.

On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, PAC salutes the heroic people of Palestine who have sacrificed so much for the liberation of their motherland. I want to assure them that victory will be theirs in the end. No determined nation or people was ever oppressed for ever. No force on earth has ever stopped a people determined to march to freedom, human dignity, peace, security and prosperity. The people of Palestine and Azania will not be an historical exception.

There are some encouraging signs - a dim light in the tunnel, but the forces of genuine liberation in Palestine and Azania must not allow the forces of euphoria and the exaggerators of "positive changes" to confuse them. The oppressed and the lovers of freedom the world over should continue to exercise vigilance regarding developments in Palestine and Azania.

PAC knows from history that no oppressors have ever relinquished power on their own. This is not going to happen in Palestine and Azania. The oppressors must be pressured instead of being trusted to change. Prophet Jeremiah correctly observed that a leopard cannot change its spots. But it can be said that modern "leopards" have become chameleons. Chameleons change their colours only as a camouflage to mislead the oppressed.

Today, in the euphoria of the so-called "new world order", the oppressed are made to believe that oppressors can be liberators. This has not happened in history. History shows that a Pharaoh has never been a Moses.

Once again on this International Day of Solidarity, PAC wishes the Palestinian people prosperous future - a result of the restoration of its usurped sovereignty and the return of its stolen land.

F. Messages from United Nations specialized agencies

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Mr. Federico Mayor, Director-General

[Original: French]

A new era is dawning in the Middle East with the signing at Washington of the Israeli-Palestinian accord on 13 September 1993. This event has raised great hopes the world over as, owing to the courage and wisdom of the signatories, the infernal machine of the Israel-Palestinian conflict seems to have ground to a halt.

It is therefore on a note of optimism that UNESCO today observes the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Partisans of dialogue throughout the world can only be thrilled at the prospect of cooperation replacing confrontation as the peace negotiations continue and intensify. Accordingly, UNESCO hopes that the Palestinian people will put all its effort into the peace process and that the international community will provide every assistance.

G. Messages from non-governmental organizations

AFRICAN SOCIETY NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

The African Society National Committee of OAU in Egypt would like to inform you that we celebrate the observance of 29 November, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in collaboration with the United Nations Association in Egypt and the Palestinian community, at the National Democratic Party premises. We fully support the causes of the Palestinian people.

ARAB ASSOCIATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

We at the Arab Association for Human Rights would like to add our voice of solidarity to the meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. We at the Association fully support the implementation of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) and all other relevant General Assembly resolutions. As international attention is focused on the future of the occupied territories, we urge the international community not to ignore the plight of the 800,000 Arab Palestinians living within the Green Line who, since 1948, have officially held Israeli citizenship.

Approximately one third of the Arab minority in Israel remain "internal refugees", unable to return to their land and homes since being uprooted during the war of 1948.

In 1948, 6.6 per cent of the land in Palestine was in Jewish hands. Today, 93 per cent of the land in Israel is in the Government's hands and some 3 per cent in Arab Palestinian hands, following land confiscation by the authorities.

Today, more than 50,000 Israeli Arabs live in some 120 officially unrecognized villages, deprived of electricity, water supply, sewerage, education, health services and under the constant threat of having the houses in which they live demolished.

The economic hardship, health hazards and educational disadvantages suffered by the Palestinians living in the "mixed cities" in Israel remain extreme.

In the Negev, in the south of the country, Arab Bedouins continue to have their land confiscated every day, and their choice remains either to live in illegal settlements under the threat of demolition, as 40,000 do, or to be moved by the Government to seven enclosed settlements, without possibility for economic growth and with the denial of basic sewage.

We urge that more pressure be exerted on the Israeli Government to effect a drastic change towards complete equality for all its citizens in Israel.

ARAB WOMEN'S UNION, BETHLEHEM

From Bethlehem, where, on Christmas Eve, on the birth of Christ, the song "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth for people of good will" was heard for the first time, we pray God to bless your meeting and bring to the Palestinians justice, in addition to peace.

ASSOCIATION OF ANTIFASCISTS AND VICTIMS OF NAZISM IN ISRAEL

The National Secretariat of the Association of Antifascists and Victims of Nazism in Israel, on behalf of all the association's members, sends fraternal greetings of solidarity to the participants of the solemn meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, marking the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 1993.

Our association, a participating NGO of the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine and a member of the International Federation of Resistance Movements, in the rank of which are many veteran servicemen and women of the World War II allied forces of the anti-Hitler coalition, former partisans, ghetto fighters and survivors of the Holocaust, as well as champions of peace and democracy, has a Jewish-Arab membership.

In a statement published after the mutual recognition of Israel and the PLO and the signing of the Declaration of Principles on 13 September 1993 between the Government of Israel and the PLO, we welcomed these accords as a first step that opens a door for great hopes that the time of war and mutual bloodshed between our two peoples would come to their end, for a future when just and lasting peace and good-neighbourly relations will prevail. In this statement, we recalled that in the political platform of our association adopted several years ago, it is stated, inter alia, that

> "Leaning on the experience of our comrades who fought during World War II against the fascist oppression and occupation of most of Europe and for the national liberation of the peoples suffering under the occupation, we are convinced that there will not be, and cannot be, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, so yearned for by all our peoples in the area, as long as Israel continues to occupy Arab territories conquered in 1967, among them also large parts of the Palestinian homeland. The peace has to be based on the principles laid down by the United Nations and by Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and on guarantees for the integrity of the future agreed-upon borders, as well as the security and safety of all peoples and States in the region, Israel and a future independent Palestinian State included."

From this point of view, it is understandable that we greet the positive change of attitude of the Israeli Government, as expressed by its recognition of the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people and in the Declaration of Principles, signed on 13 September 1993, towards a peaceful solution of the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab conflicts.

At the same time, we warn against the dangers and the existing obstacles imperiling the road to the wished-for peace. We condemn the pogromist actions of extremist groups, among them racist and fascist elements, from among the Israeli colonialist settlers, perpetrated against peaceful Palestinians, backed by other radical right-wing parties in Israel, while the occupationist Israeli "security forces" look the other way. We condemn the continued hunt for Palestinian so-called "warranted terrorists" and their killing on sight by the special units of the occupation army, as well as the continuation of other oppressive measures against the Palestinian population still enacted by Israel's army and police.

We also condemn terrorist actions perpetrated by Palestinian groups who attempt to foil the peace process by undermining the PLO, call for ending the intifadah and continue to commit murderous attacks upon Israelis. The Israeli radicals among the colonialist settlers and the Palestinian extremists - both minorities among their peoples - who undermine the peace process by such actions, pull, objectively, at the same end of the rope, attempting to strangle the peace process.

On this Day of Solidarity, we greet the Palestinian people in general, and in particular the ones who still live under Israeli occupation rule, and wish that they may achieve their national goals, their liberation and the implementation of their right to independent statehood on the soil of their homeland, side by side in peaceful coexistence with Israel according to the principle of "two States for the two peoples - Israel and Palestine".

We wish, together with all the enlightened people of this world and in our region, that the peace process aiming at ending the century of bloodshed and establishing comprehensive, just and lasting peace for all our peoples will become true as soon as possible.

We pledge to contribute to this goal as much as possible in our modest capacity.

ASSOCIATION FOR SUPPORT AND DEFENCE OF BEDOUIN RIGHTS IN ISRAEL

We, the Naqab/Negev Bedouin, give our blessings to the signing of mutual recognition between the Government of Israel and the PLO, as well as to the signing of the Declaration of Principles for the negotiation and implementation of the peace process called "Gaza and Jericho First".

The recognition between Israelis and Palestinians is very important for every Israeli and every Palestinian - for peace, welfare and security.

We, the Naqab/Negev Bedouin, we are both Israelis and Palestinians. Where are our peace, welfare and security?

On the day the great event went into the news, the notorious "Green Patrols" evacuated seven families of the Al-'Azazmeh tribe in the Negev mountain and threw their broken tents somewhere in the neighbourhood of Ramat-Hovav - Israel's chemicals cemetery - where air and water pollution is very serious. Besides removing us from our ancestral lands where, for generations, we have been accustomed to our traditional lifestyle, we are put on land that brings us closer to death.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin! Chairman Yasser Arafat!

We are both Israelis and Palestinians!

Make peace also with us!

Recognize our rights in the Naqab/Negev!

Maybe we don't always have the right papers proving our land ownership rights - but where do you think we have lived for the last 300 years and before? You know very well! In the sands of the Naqab/Negev!

There we wish to live forever and develop in our way, on our own and in our time.

The concentration of the Bedouin in seven sterile townships without sources of livelihood and without our traditional livelihood of agriculture and grazing flocks brings us closer to death.

Dear Prime Minister, dear Chairman, recognize us. Make peace with us!

We are both Palestinians and Israelis.

We are both Israelis and Palestinians.

ASSOCIAZIONE MEDICA ITALO-PALESTINESE

The Associazione Media Italo-Palestinese expresses its solidarity on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People that will be held in Vienna on 29 November.

CENTRO DE DOCUMENTACION EN DERECHOS HUMANOS "SEGUNDO MONTES MOZO S.J."

[Original: Spanish]

There is no doubt whatsoever that 29 November 1993, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, is especially significant given the recent historic events in which the State of Israel and the PLO participated when they signed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements on 13 September 1993 at Washington.

For all of mankind, and especially for all organizations and sectors identified with democracy, justice, freedom and the defence of human rights, this landmark decision will help usher in a lasting peace throughout the region and will promote prosperity and well-being in the Middle East, without wars, destruction or suffering.

On this day, our organization, the "Segundo Montes Mozo S.J." Human Rights Documentation Centre, wishes to share with you its certainty that this longed-for goal will be achieved, leading to a genuine coexistence between Israel and Palestine, supported, in the words of Chairman Yasser Arafat, by the strongest "determination to pursue together the path of cooperation and peace".

I should appreciate it if, on this commemorative date, you would transmit these wishes to all the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to the Division for Palestinian Rights and to the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, in New York.

INSTITUTO DE ESTUDIOS ISLAMICOS

[Original: Spanish]

The Instituto de Estudios Islamicos is an NGO that has consistently denounced, over the last 40 years, the acts of deceit which have enabled Zionism, with the assistance of the super-Powers which emerged victorious from the Second World War, to create the artificial State called Israel.

Among the above-mentioned acts of deceit I might briefly recall: the complete absence of any national link between international Judaism and the territory of Palestine; the non-existence of a Jewish nation in the modern age; the anthropologically proven non-existence as the so-called "Jewish race"; the perpetual terrorist crimes of Zionism, which include the assassination by members of this criminal clique of the United Nations Mediator for Palestine, Count Folke Bernadotte. One of the assassins was Mr. Menachem Begin, subsequently Prime Minister of Israel. Some years later, this criminal received the Nobel Peace Prize.

The crimes perpetrated by Zionism against the Palestinian people both predate and postdate the birth of the artificial State of Israel in 1948. All this has been denounced in the 1981 publication: El sionismo: la mayor estafa del siglo XX (Zionism: the greatest swindle of the twentieth century), published with the financial assistance of the Mission of the PLO in Peru.

In numerous resolutions of the General Assembly, zionism has been condemned as a form of imperialism, colonialism and racism.

In addition, zionism is expansionist by nature. It has the absurd aim of "re-establishing" the biblical State of Eretz Yisrael.

This expansionism has led Israel to invade and annex territory of the Arab States bordering on Palestine, such as the Syrian Arab Republic, whose Golan Heights have been annexed by Israel; it has invaded Lebanon; it invaded the Sinai peninsula; the Holy City of Jerusalem (Al-Quds) has been annexed as its State capital, despite the fact that the international community has approved an international status for this city.

Despite the artificial nature of Israel, we believe that the agreement concluded between Mr. Arafat and Mr. Rabin should remain in force.

In the history of humankind there are countless artificial States created by imperialist, colonialist and other powers. Suffice it to mention one case, as an objective example: Panama, a region which, until 1904, came under the sovereignty of Colombia and was constituted as a Republic by the Power that wished to build an interoceanic canal.

Today Panama has been in existence for 50 years. It has been legitimized by history and by international legislation.

There is currently no person or group that favours the return of Panama to Colombian sovereignty.

In the case of Israel, despite its artificial birth, it has now been recognized as a State by the international community (including several States of the Arab world and the Ummah).

This Institute will continue to denounce the terrorism, expansionism, racism, etc., of zionism; it will, however, emphasize the need to recognize Israel (an Israel free of zionism).

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR ARAB-ISRAELI RECONCILIATION

The International Committee for Arab-Israeli Reconciliation expresses its solidarity with the people of Palestine on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People at the United Nations. The Committee firmly believes that peace with justice in Palestine can only be attained by winning the hearts of the Israelis by non-violent means and by promoting friendship and understanding between the Palestinians and Israelis.

INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT OF CONSCIENTIOUS WAR RESISTERS

When the approach to life is as "half-by-half", "hesitant", "for the time being", "for us" and the like, uneven and imbalanced approaches, it is always sure that the destructive results will be complete. Therefore, beware!

Also nowadays, when negotiations are taking place for a peace agreement, for more than one and a half years, and even yesterday and today when the agreement is being implemented step by step - still innocent people are being killed. The only fault of these good people is that they happened to be in a country where there is a conflict taking place and those involved in it think it fit to be resolved by violence.

Blessed should be the moment that brought the belligerent parties' leaders to the negotiating table seeking agreement. Blessed should be the moment that brought them to the beginning of agreement.

The provisional nature to which the present agreement is heading is not for the benefit of the agreement and is not for the benefit of the masses, who always pay the price in blood of the mistakes of those who have put themselves to lead the masses - to blood or to water.

The good act should be completed immediately. Whole peace immediately. Self-determination and self-rule for the Palestinians in all the territories occupied since 1967. Total withdrawal of the Israeli Defence Forces from all the territories. Freedom of conscientious objection to military service for every human - immediately. Immediately stop the mutual chasing of warriors on both sides and let everyone go to their homes. Trust is created through positive acts, not by the continuation of acts of enmity. The rehabilitation of those hurt by enmity - the Palestinian refugees and others - should start immediately.

INTERNATIONAL PROGRESS ORGANIZATION

The International Progress Organization (IPO), with headquarters in Vienna, supports the rights of the Palestinian people to its own State and freedom from Israeli occupation throughout the occupied territories.

IPO welcomes the breakthrough of the signing of the Declaration of Principles between the Government of Israel and the PLO.

While this accord is of great historical significance, it is essential that the accord be followed up with concrete agreements that will lead to a completely independent State for the people of Palestine, that will include the removal of all the occupying forces from all the occupied territories and the return to the Palestinians of the entire West Bank, Gaza and the eastern part of the city of Jerusalem.

We call upon the United States of America and the other members of the Security Council and all countries that are friendly to the Arab people to demonstrate their friendship by financially supporting the nascent State of Palestine, in order to enable Palestine to build a proper and sufficient infrastructure and a productive economy. This support must be ongoing and must continue until the State of Palestine is in a position to support itself economically.

We express our heartfelt praise to the leadership of the Palestinian people and especially to Chairman Yasser Arafat for his momentous decisions which we believe will lead ultimately to peace in the entire Middle East.

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS

On 13 September 1993, an agreement between the PLO and the Israeli Government was signed at the White House at Washington. This agreement envisages the establishment of Palestinian self-rule in the historic town of Jericho and in the Gaza Strip. It also anticipates the withdrawal of the Israeli troops from these two Palestinian territories in four months and the handing over, to an elected Palestinian Council, of issues like health, education, police and civil administration.

The International Union of Students (IUS) has always expressed its support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people and students for their legitimate rights to self-determination, including the establishment of their independent State under the leadership of their sole and legitimate representative, the PLO. At the same time, IUS, at its sixteenth congress, demanded a just and comprehensive settlement for the Middle East problem based on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the exchange of land for peace.

With the signing of this agreement, a new chapter has been opened in this region, bringing with its new hopes for a better future. However, to achieve this goal, urgent steps must be taken towards the solution of the problems of Palestinian refugees, the dismantling of the Israeli settlements, and towards the withdrawal of Israel from East Jerusalem. No real and comprehensive peace can be established without resolving these crucial issues.

While welcoming this agreement as a first step on the long road to finding a just and comprehensive settlement to the Middle East crisis, the Executive Secretariat of IUS urges the international student community to continue its actions in solidarity with and support for the Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese peoples and students, until a final and just settlement on the Middle East crisis is achieved.

ISRAEL SECULAR HUMANIST ASSOCIATION

The unbelievable has happened! The Government of Israel, headed by Yitzhak Rabin, has signed an agreement of mutual recognition with the PLO, headed by Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Since the days of Israeli Prime Minister Golda Me'ir, who didn't recognize the Palestinian people's existence at all, we have come a long and hard way, full of bloodshed and suffering, especially for the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Palestinian intifadah has proven once again that an army is able to overcome armies but cannot overcome a popular uprising. The political, religious, national and social realities within the Israeli and Palestinian communities have brought about the birth of an agreement that is difficult for both sides. There is no doubt that following the "Gaza-Jericho First" agreement, we will all be going along a hard and dangerous path in the coming years, however, with a hope that a Palestinian State will be established alongside the State of Israel. The two States will have good neighbourly relations between themselves and open borders to the degree possible, in order that a former Arab resident of Jaffa will be able to visit that city and even reside in it without resorting to occupy it; or a Jew who seeks to live in Hebron, the city of the forefathers, will be able to live in it without the need to rule it.

We wish that both peoples may reach the end of their confrontation and put an end to the tremendous suffering of the Palestinian people. Along with this, and since a taboo has been broken and this fact requires partition and the setting of boundaries, it is possible that the foreseeable great difficulties ahead for all of us will give birth not only to extremist nationalist and religious groups but also groups of intellectuals, people of culture and action, for whom borders, fences, border police, customs agents, passports and visas are not their ideals. It will be accepted by them that these instruments are not for the benefit of their two nations or of humanity.

It is possible that ideas concerning the option of an undivided whole land will also be conceived. It is not impossible to maintain a country with cantons that will satisfy the religious or national needs of the population with a federal government, committed by a constitution to human and civil rights; that separates religion and State; that divides separatist tendencies and the State; and insures the non-intervention of the State in religious and ethnic communities' affairs - according to the model of the first amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America.

We send blessings to the evolving Palestinian State and also a blessing to the Israeli people which has started to liberate itself from the yoke of being an occupier.

In the new reality that will be created, we also wish for the possibility of the development of better perspectives for both sides.

LATIN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

[Original: Spanish]

The Latin American Association for Human Rights (ALDHU) presents its compliments to you.

Through the media, we have followed with great interest the signing of the peace agreement between Israel and the PLO and the various steps taken to implement it.

We therefore enthusiastically support those efforts and the proposals aimed at achieving peace in the Middle East. We also advocate the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

Similarly, we associate ourselves fraternally with the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, to be held on 29 November 1993 at United Nations Headquarters in New York, and the other events being held on this occasion in various parts of the world.

In Quito, the permanent headquarters of ALDHU, our institution will be participating, through its Secretary-General, in a panel on the historic peace process between Israel and the PLO, entitled: "The Peace Process in the Middle East: Assessment and Prospects". At it we shall confirm our stand in defence of peace and peaceful coexistence in the region and in favour of the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

Finally, we wish to reaffirm our keen interest in the holding of the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine and also to inform you that approximately 300 NGOs in the region have confirmed their intention to participate in that event.

UNION OF PALESTINIAN AMERICAN WOMEN

The observance of 29 November, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, stands as a significantly recognizable day to respectfully commend the special peace efforts and commitment of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The signing of the historical Palestinian/Israeli peace accord, on 13 September 1993, has undoubtedly given the Palestinian people a new vision, as well as a new meaning to the realization of self-determination, national independence and the establishment of a Palestinian State.

With this open and prevailing window of opportunity for the reversal of misfortune and long human suffering, it is imperative that all United Nations specialized agencies and bodies exert every effort to participate in the realization and implementation of all relevant United Nations resolutions. This significant opportunity for Palestinian human and economic development should deepen our commitment to justice, peace, human rights and the advancement of all people in the Middle East region.

During this year's observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Union of Palestinian American Women wishes to impress upon the world community, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and United Nations specialized agencies the importance of mutually sharing the vision of a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement by deepening the bonds of international relationships with the Palestinian people.

The future destiny of the Palestinian nation, its people, its land, culture and leadership deserve our genuinely peaceful assurances for the restoration of human principles and the preservation and protection of the newly emerging Palestinian society and State.

IV. CLOSING STATEMENTS

Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

[Original: French]

I should like, on behalf of the entire Committee, to express sincere gratitude to the Heads of State and Government, Foreign Ministers, Governments, the concerned organizations and all participants for their constant efforts towards securing a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine and for their steadfast support for the objectives and activities of the Committee.

The statements that we have heard and the messages of solidarity that we have received today demonstrate once again the determination of the international community to progress towards the establishment of peace in the Middle East through the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, based on United Nations resolutions. I can assure all those present that we, the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, will spare no effort to achieve these objectives.

Before adjourning this solemn meeting, I wish to thank all those who helped to organize this day - in particular, the members of the Division for Palestinian Rights, the Office of Conference Services and the Department of Public Information, as well as those who work behind the scenes to see to our security.

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